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PERSWASIVE  
TO  
MODERATION 698. 2.6  
AND  
FORBEARANCE  
IN  
LOVE.  
AMONG THE  
DIVIDED FORMS  
OF  
CHRISTIANS.

By that late most Pious and Eminent Divine,  
Mr JEREMIAH WHITE, Late Fellow  
of Trinity-Colledge in Cambridge,  
Preacher to the Council of State, and  
Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell.

**The Second Edition.**

To which is added,  
His Particulars for our Converse with Men, &c.

*Is Christ Divided, 1 Cor. i. xiii.*

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THE  
EPISTLE DEDICATORY  
OF THE  
EDITOR,

To His True and  
Much Esteemed FRIEND

Mr John Tarrey.

SIR,

**I**F Persons ought to be valued,  
chiefly for their Intrinsic  
Worth, and their being Instru-  
mental of the Benefit of Mankind;  
or to be regarded according to the  
Degrees of true Friendship and Chri-  
B \* stian



## The Dedication.

stian Love, rather than Great Titles and other External Advantages ; I doubt not but your Name, as it justly claims, so will as Honourably maintain this Post of Patronage of the ensuing Treatise of your Friend, so Intimate and Indear'd to you in his Life Time ; and from whom by Death you cannot be divided.

It is well known, the Author was much in Esteem and Friendship with many Noble Lords and Ladies of the Highest Quality, who might not have disdained the Acceptance of it: But I find such a Knot of Reasons concurring, as seem to render it inevitably your Right and Peculiar.

As, beside what is mentioned of your particular Friendship, That constant and uninterrupted Series of Good Offices you kept up towards the Author, while Living: And that pleasant Tie of Mutual Respect and Familiarity, in which you stood together: Insomuch, that you seem'd to be

## The Dedication.

be at the same time, his Patron and his humble Servant, his Scholar and his Master.

Your being so great an Instrument in Forwarding and Hastening his Works, that they might be reduc'd to Order, and Prepar'd for the Publick Service before his Departure.

The Obliging Policies you made use of to get him often into Retirement, from the Hurry and Multiplicity of his other Engagements, and so General Converse; to labour hard to this Good End for one part of the Time, and meet his Refreshment and Divertisement in your Company the other; as a present Reward.

In a particular manner, you alone being the Person into whose Hand and Care he had chosen to deposit his Works in Manuscript; and from whose Hand the World is to be Obliged with them. Where I must add your Faithfulness and Zeal in the Discharge of this your Trust,



## The Dedication.

to Promote and Hasten them for the Benefit of the Publick, and the Satisfaction of those who have so much desired them.

And lastly, As you are one in whom the Spirit of the Author in such degree survives and acts, as a Living Edition of his Book of Charity and Moderation.

I might add, Your particular Regard to his Memory and Methods of Expressing it. But I am affraid I have spoke too much Truth already; and expect to be taken to Task if I press too far upon your Modesty: Which will, in this Case, be apt to think, the Highest Justice the Highest Injury.

And this Catalogue of Merits and Qualifications, may serve, in my Opinion, to recommend Your Plain Name and Character, in as good a Figure as a Dedicator could desire; and make it stand Equivalent to Knight, Squire or Lord.

And

## The Dedication.

And that you may not disallow of the Liberty here taken with you, or think it less suitable, Remember this Epistle stands for the Author's to You, before his own Book. Think then 'tis He, Your Old Friend, that speaks in his wonted Freedom, and all is well.

As the Editor has this agreeable Province fallen to his Lot, so he cannot but own the Providential Furniture that first gave him the Knowledge of your self upon the Death of our Friend; as opening both the Way of Succession into the Inheritance of some of his more peculiar Friendships; and the means of bringing him again upon the Stage of the World; being Dead, yet to speak, and carry on his Blessed Work of Charity and Unity.

That You, Sir, may enjoy the Reward of true Friendship, and of this Your Good Will and Service to the World before you leave it; and see the Good Influences and Effects of  
both



## **The Dedication.**

*both, in the Propagation of this Spirit of Universal Love, and the general Blessing of God upon it in this Nation: With Friendships Multiplied to that Degree, as to overbalance the Loss of this so Singular One, is the Vote and Prayer of*

**Your Sincere and Affectionate**

**Friend and Servant,**

**R. ROACH.**

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**A D.**

# ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**Here being a Design of Publishing  
the rest of Mr White's Works, any  
that have either Letters, or other Manuscripts of his by them, are desired to Communicate them to Mr John Tarrey, Distiller, at the Golden Fleece, near Shadwell-Dock, and they shall be thankfully received, and Promoted for the Publick Benefit; with Charges born, &c.

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# PREFACE.

**I**T cannot but be admir'd by those that trace the Footsteps of the Divine Providence, in its secret Conduct of the Affairs both of Church and State in this Nation, how God has been of late Years, gradually, and at last more visibly and powerfully working to bring the Minds of Men to a greater Temper and Moderation; to expose the Folly, and abate the Violences of the Extreame on all Hands; and to qualify the Spirits of Misguided Zealots in Religion, and stop the Contentions of the Di-



vided Parties about Mint and Cummin, Modes and Circumstances ; and direct their Warmth and Concern for the more weighty Matters of the Christian Law. In a Word, to promote Concord and Unity among all.

It is also admirable, to observe what great Instruments have been rais'd up to give Authority and Countenance to, and effectually to forward this great Design. How the Temporal Government has been made sensible of the need of this Spirit of Moderation, and acted vigorously for it, and by it in the former, and especially the present Reign ; insomuch, as to influence other Kings and Princes to pursue the same Methods and End. And particularly how God has Blest these Measures under her present Majesty's Government, with Success in many surprizing Instances, where his own Arm has been made

made bare, and clearly distinguish-  
able from the Arm of Flesh in Fa-  
vour of it, and given this Nation  
to see the Blessings of Concord, and  
the Triumphs of Unity. As if he  
had singled out the State *Politick*,  
and set it as an Example and *Look-  
ing-Glass* to the *Ecclesiastick*:  
Wherein they might read what  
God will hereafter do for Them;  
And how gloriously he will appear  
for and in his Church, when the  
same Measures shall be as Vigorous-  
ly and Generally pursued therein.  
When the Spirit of Unity and Fra-  
ternal Love shall have gotten the  
*Ascendant* in the Church.

And this we may have good  
Hopes to see, because we see the  
Hand of God is engaged therein,  
and at work in a more than ordi-  
nary manner: Whose Great End  
in all is the good of his *Church* and  
His *Glory* in it.



'Tis to this End the present Tract is levell'd. And it was the last thing the Author was busied about before his Death to put it in order for the Press. Which he had done, as to the Substance of the Book, excepting only in the Answer to one Objection, and part of another: Which is here endeavour'd to be supplied. The Body of the Work was Compos'd before, and partly deliver'd at times in Sermons, at a *Union-Lecture* in this City. It is not all that he deliver'd upon that Subject; but what he himself had selected out of the whole for the present Design. Hence the Reader is not to expect a Formal Treatise upon the Subject; but some of the Principal Branches displayed: And especially the deep *Root* and Foundation of Christian Charity and Unity laid open, with the Arguments for it thence arising, in such a manner as



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as scarce any before him have done. And it may reasonably be hoped, they may have as uncommon Effects upon the Mind of Men; to prepare and dispose them for that Blessed Reconciliation and Restoration of the Divided Parts of Christ's Church, to their Primitive State: For which the Call and Operation of the Divine Providence and Spirit appear so evidently at this Day.

Now the great Obstacle of Unity in the Church, must be owned to lie at the Door of the Pastors of each Sect, who are the Obstinate Maintainers of them. Here then in all Probability the Work will most eminently begin, and the Foundations and Pillars of all Parties be shaken, that what is amiss in all, may be scatter'd and dissolved: And then that which hinder'd being remov'd, the Good will of it

self coalesce and combine into One.

But Oh! how hard a thing is it for the Abettors of these Sects, to see the General Truth! May we not take up our Complaint, and say, It is easier for a *Camel* to go thro the Eye of a Needle, than for any of these to get thro the *Streights of Particularity*; in which the Pass is found into that Latitude of Christian Charity, which may be compar'd to the *Midland Sea*, accomodating to and washing every Shoar? How hard is it for one that has been Educated in a particular Way, which is become a Habit, as a Second Nature to him; Whose Credit and Reputation is bound up in it; Whose Interest and Settlement is found in it; And at last, Who has been a Teacher of others in this Way; to see a contrary Truth thro all this



this? 'Tis indeed the Eye of a Needle. Yet to *see* thro the Eye of a Needle is possible: But to be Emptyed, to be Resigned, to be Mortified, to be Denudated, to be Annihilated, to be so Dead to Earth and *Flesh*, and the Wisdom of it, and so Poor and Little in *Spirit*, as actually to pass, and go through this Streight; Oh Christian Brethren, *Hic Labor*, &c. This we may say is impossible with Men. Tho all things are possible with God. With Men 'tis insuperable Difficulty, Invincible Error or Ignorance: But before the Mighty Power and Hand of God set to the Work, Darkness becomes Light, and Impossibility is made Practicable. And we may yet hope to see it: To see even the Incharnted Circle of the Christian *Babel* of Division, broken through, into *Primitive Unity*.



I am far from supposing all alike culpable in this Point; tho few wholly Excusable. I believe there are many that have a Good Intent, and Desire of the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church; but discern not the Secret and fine twisted Cords by which they are held: Others uneasy at the Defects and Disorders even of their own Party, wishing and Praying, yea endeavouring after Amendment of 'em; signalizing themselves in the Spirit of Moderation and Charity, and standing well dispos'd whenever the *Providence* of God, and the Wisdom of the *Government* shall invite, and point out the Way, heartily to concur in the Glorious Work of *Union in the Church* also. Which would be more for the true Interest and Good of the Kingdom, the Honour of the Government, and the Glory of God, than the Union of its  
Parts

Parts in *External Polity*. This would be as *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*. A Soul Harmoniz'd in all its Powers and Faculties, actuating a Body in the Integrity, Proportion and Unity of all its Members.

Most of the *Contrary* Opinions which divide the Christian World, if understood aright, and taken in with due Qualification, might be found Adopted, and sweetly combined together in God's *Scheme* of Truth. As the *same* Motion Eastward upon the upper part of a Globe, continued till it come to the lower part, would become contrary, and move Westward; and in process return to the first Determination again, and all in the simple Movement of one Circular Line; so in God's *Scheme* or *Sphere* of Truth, even Contraries are *Reconcil'd* and embrac'd to-



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together in its Comprehensive Unity.

The particular Opinions of *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Arminius*, differ more in the Explanations, Distortions, and Excesses of their *Expositors* and Abettors, than they really do in themselves: And may be shown all Reconciled, and consistent together with Truth, and a good Meaning in their first Authors.

There is *Free-Will*, and there is *Free Grace*, both founded on Scripture. There is *Predestination*; there is *Election*, and *Reprobation*; so taken as they may all stand together in *God's Hypothesis*: But when Men take 'em asunder, and set 'em one against another, and make distinct and contrary Hypotheses of em; not looking for, or reaching the true *Medium of Unity*, they make wild Work indeed in the Christian Theology.



And here is the Rise of Error, Sect and Division in the Church of Christ; the departing from this Medium of Truth's Unity, the Pillar fixt by Christ and his Apostles, and maintain'd by the one Spirit, under the Simplicity of the Gospel, into the Multiplicity or Confusion of Carnal and Worldly Wisdom, in Tenets, Traditions, Constitutions, Creeds, Modes and Forms of Religion; some Right, some Wrong, some Good, some Bad, some Indifferent; but proving in the Event, a Snare to many Souls, and drawing so far into and beyond the just *Circumferences* and Bounds of Truth and Religion, that they lose both the sight and Hold of the *Centre*, and possession of the *Substance* of it. And thus the Divided Churches, the more they recede from the Spirit and Truth, the more they degenerate into a Wisdom and Religion

ligion rather *Moral* or Rational ;  
or even Worldly, or going Hand  
in Hand with the Spirit of this  
World, than Divine and *Evange-  
lical*.

And may we not here take up  
our Lamentation, and say, Is this  
the Spouse of Christ? Is this the  
Image and Representative of its  
Glorious Head? Has this Model  
on Earth any relation to the Glo-  
rious Church or Spouse above?  
Where the Head is one, and the  
Members are one ; all combining,  
embracing, harmonizing and act-  
ing together as one. Concentring  
their Life and Vigour in his Glo-  
rious Person, and dilating or dif-  
fusing their Powers under the Ope-  
ration, and in the Unity of his  
Spirit? But alas! What Resem-  
blance of this here on Earth. How  
little Agreement of the present  
Christian Church, either with this,  
or with the Primitive Church in  
its



its *Apostolical* Foundation here? How distorted her Features! How blurr'd her Characters of Correspondence with her Original! He is One, She is Many: He is Love, She is in Enmity, and at War with her self; and consequently with Him, and He with Her. He is Truth, She fill'd and big with Error. He has one Seamless Garment, She has numerous Changes of Rayment, and that out of the Wardrobe of *Babylon*. How far from being cloath'd with the Sun, and Crown'd with Stars, and having the Moon under her Feet, and being call'd by that Triumphant and Sacred Name, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!** And tho the Cries go forth on all Hands, *Behold the Bridegroom comes;* Where is her Wedding-Garment? Where is her Faith? Where is her Love-Lamp burning with the Unction of the Spirit; her Zeal,  
her



her Preparation, her Haste to meet him? How then can she expect him as a Bridegroom? Or otherwise than a Judge?

If so, has she not Reason then to expect and pray for an *Elias* Work, and Day to precede; that may begin to purge the Floor, and kindle the Refiner's Fire, and purify the Sons of *Levi*? That may turn the Hearts of the Fathers [in the Church] to the Children, and the Hearts of the Children to the Fathers; and indeed, as necessary at this Day, the Hearts both of the Fathers and Children to each other, in the Blessed Accord of Charity, Truth and Unity; that upon the sight of such Reformation indeed begun, and earnestly pursued, the Hand of God may be stayed, and withheld from smiting.

Here then we see how the Preparation-Work must begin, *viz.*  
by

by *Reconciliation* and *Union*. And the First Step to Reconciliation and Union with one another, is, *Moderation* and *Forbearance* of one another. And would the Divided Parties but be prevail'd upon to come a little closer, to converse, bear with, and freely hear each other, they might begin to gather up the broken or scatter'd Rays of Divine Truth and Light, and carry 'em up towards their Point again, wherein they all Unite.

There is at present, too great a Distance and Animosity between the High *Spiritualist*, and Lower *Formalist*. Excesses and Defects in all. Some would run Religion all into Soul: Others, all into Body. A little Yielding and Temper on both Hands, might bring forth again both the *Soul* and *Body* of Christianity, according to the Intent and Mind of Christ, as he at first appointed it; suited

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to



to our Nature, and our present State.

The lower Forms of Religion might in the Eye of Charity be look'd upon more favourably as Helps taken up in this latter Age of the Church, wherein Primitive Zeal is so much decayed, and the Holy Spirit so much withdrawn: If Men would not Rest in 'em; make a Religion of 'em; set 'em up as Tests of Admission and Exclusion; or hold 'em up against the Rising Power and Spirit of Religion it self. And 'tis at *This* that God is more offended, than simply at the *Forms* themselves.

If now those that are arrived to a State of Manhood, in the Church of Christ, would not quarrel with, and beat the Children for not being Men as well as themselves: And if the Children would not throw Stones at the Men, as Monsters for being above their size;



size ; but these be looking forward and growing on to become Men, and the Men likewise to become Elders : Which State both in the Spirit of True Religion, and also in Charity, comprehends them both ; and who in the Divine simplicity become Children again ; Truly, such of whom is the Kingdom of Heaven : If it were thus, the Children might be left in quiet to their Leading-strings : *i. e.* so as not to tie 'em about others Feet. And the Young Men be allowed their Zeal and Spiritual Sword, if they would not turn it against Friends as well as Foes, for being Lesser or Greater than themselves : And it would be better for 'em both, if the true Elders in Christianity (such as this Author indeed was) were allowed their due Regard among 'em. But if every Age, and every Sect of Religion, think themselves Best,

themselves Highest, themselves Wisest, how can there chuse but follow Spiritual Anarchy, and Confusion in the Church?

'Twill never be well with *Christendom*, till she comes to distinguish her *Outward*, her *Inner*, and her *Inmost* Court in God's Temple: Till *Milk* for Children, strong *Meat* for Men, and higher Extracted *Spirit* for her Elders, be permitted to be given forth in its due Season, Place and Order. Then would not there be occasion of such Ruptures and Divisions; but the Servants of God be trained up in their several Degrees, and Rise into their proper Orders, all in Blessed Peace and Unity.

These Considerations may serve to shew the Usefulness and Appositness of the present Work: And help to discern the Spirit and Intent of the Author. Whose  
Cha-

Character, so Great and so well known, I shall not here undertake to draw; only a Line or two that may have an Aspect upon the present Design.

His Qualifications, for doing Justice to a Subject of this Nature, were very peculiar, and some such, as few others could have. He was Himself tied up to no Form, but stood even loose to that in which he was educated; and consequently Free from the Bias which appears in the Writers of Particular Parties, and so could freely let in the Truth from all sides, and allow each their Due: And having no Animosity against them for Difference in Sentiment or Worship, could the more readily practise, and from thence more justly describe that Spirit of Moderation and Charity, to our Divided, yet Christian Brethren, which is  
here



here set forth. To which may be added his so Free and General Converse, with Persons of all Perswasions for so many Years; so as not only to hear and to weigh every one's Plea to the utmost; but to be acquainted with the Inward State, and maintain a Free Communion in the Spirit with them, as found living Members together with him of the same Head. His Great Learning, *Unlearn'd* again, or depos'd from its Mastership in the Spirit of this World, to a Child-like Submission and Subjection to the Spirit of God: His commanding Eloquence: His Deep Skill both in the Letter and the Mystery of the Scripture: Together with the Advantage of his Natural Candor and Goodness; concurr'd to furnish him for this Blessed Work of Christian Mediation among his Brethren,

thren. Which is here done in such a Manner as I am perswaded, contrary to what is generally the Event in such like Cases, no Side or Party will be provok'd or offended at him.

This Treatise was design'd by the Author to Fore-run and Prepare the Way for his other Works, which, as this shall find a Candid Reception, may be Produced and follow in God's Time.

May the God of Peace and Love, work mightily and powerfully, in the Hearts of all to whom this Love-Invitation shall be made known. And as the Spirit says come, and as the Bride says come, so let him that Heareth, and that Readeth, say come and let us return from our many Narrow and Broken Cisterns to our own Original Fountain, where we may drink of the Waters of Life freely. And  
may

may the Effusion of the Blessed Spirit, as the Waters of the Sanctuary, encrease daily, even till all the Divided and Wandering Rivulets Return, and be Absorpt into their Ocean. Till as there is One God the Father of all, One Christ the Head of the Church, and one Spirit the Principle of its Life, the Band of Unity, and Incorporation of all its Members; so there may be actually found but one Church: And in that one Faith, and one Worship: In such a manner as God himself requires to be Believed in, and to be Worshipped by all, viz. in Spirit and in Truth. By his own Spirit, not the Will of Man. In the Substance, not in the Shadow.

So hasten thy Work, O Lord, and fulfil thy Will: For the Glory of thy Name, and for the Honour of thy Everlasting Love.

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THE  
UNION LECTURE:  
OR, AN  
INVITATION  
TO  
Forbearance in LOVE.

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Eph. IV. II.

*Forbearing one another in Love.*

The Context runs thus: *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called, with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-Suffering, forbearing one another in Love.*

**I** Therefore the Prisoner of the Lord; or the Prisoner in the Lord; whatsoever my outward State is, I am inseparable from the Lord; I am in the Lord, and the Lord is in me, the Lord is with

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me

me in Prison; or I the Prisoner for the Lord, or I the Prisoner in the Lord, *bound in Spirit* by the Spirit of the Lord, to be, and do, and suffer every thing at his Bidding: And to be led by him where-soever he pleaseth; or I the Prisoner for the Lord, for *my Testimony to him*, I beseech you that you walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are called, with all Lowliness, and Meekness, or Humility; with that Modesty, and sober Frame of Spirit, which gives us the lowest Thoughts of our selves; and teacheth us to esteem others better than our selves.

In all *Long-Suffering*, not only with that Lenity which is not moved with little Offences, but in that Long-Suffering which is not disturbed, or provoked by great and repeated Ones. That you forbear one another, that you tolerate one another, that you support one another, that you bear one another's Burthens of Ignorance, Passion, Weakness, Infirmities, Mistakes, and Temptations; not ceasing because of these, to love, and to do all the Good you can to one another.

In *Love*. Let *Love* be the Principle and Spring of your Forbearance; let Love direct the measure and the manner of it; let it be guided by a Love so Pure, so Heavenly and so True, that it can never comply with any thing that is Sinful, but yet it doth all things that tend



to the Good and Welfare of our Brother. Let Love be the Impulsive Cause of our Forbearance, not a Natural Affection, not a Self-Interest, not a Fondness for any Party of good Men. Let us forbear one another in that *Divine* Love which subdues all other Considerations unto its self, in that Love which doth not lift up it self, which doth not behave it self unseemly, which doth not seek its own things, dividing it self from the *whole*, by a particular *Self-Love*. In that Love which *bears all things*, in that Love which *covers, contains, and comprehends* all things with strictest and tenderest Embraces in it self, as one self with its self. In that Love which *believeth* all things, hopeth all things, *suffereth* all things, *rejoiceth* not in *Iniquity*, but in the Truth.

I will spend no more Time in explaining these Words. The Emphatical Weight of any of them will fall in better afterwards, and with advantage; and because indeed they are easily understood. We all of us know what these Words signify: The difficulty lies in the Practice of what they so plainly say to us.

And indeed my Bowels are greatly, many times, moved within me, when I consider what a sad Necessity there is among God's People of all sorts, to remember them of this great Truth. Yea, to prove it to them; for it hath not on-



ly been a Truth forgotten and neglected; but too much disputed, and denyed among us: The very Judgments of good Men have hung too loose in this Point, and therefore it is no Marvel, that in our Practice we have taken too much Liberty. We have not in Judgment charg'd our selves as we should do: Our very Judgments have been bent another way. We have thought it a great Perfection in us to judge and censure our *differing*, and it may be *mistaken*, Brother; and upon all Occasions to express our Dislike of him. We have valued our selves too much upon our siding with this, or that Party of good Men, and standing at a distance from others; as it was in the Church of the *Corinthians*; one saying, *I am of Paul*, another *I am of Apollos*, another *I am of Cephas*; they thinking by their being of one or the other, they were more spiritual. But saith the Apostle, *are ye not Carnal, and walk as Men.*

When *Joseph* had but a little disguised his Relation to his Brethren, and spoken roughly to them, and with a great deal of Difficulty treated them with a little Severity, altho it was with a Design of Love to them, and for their Good; yet the Story tells us, that his Heart was so full, he was forced to make haste into a private Room to Weep: But where are the inward Meltings of our Hearts into Tears,  
over

over our unkind, and how unjust our Carriages towards our differing Brethren? Where are the Relentings of our Bowels within us, for the Breaches which have not only been made, but maintained among good Men?

This therefore is the Point I would now take upon me to argue for. That all good Men ought mutually to forbear one another in Love, and to hold together against the whole World: Notwithstanding their particular Differences, Mistakes, Infirmities and Failings; (which good Men are not exempt from while they are here on Earth.) And to perswade them to that Moderation, Forbearance, Allowance, Respect and Kindness, which not only Charity, but Justice and Interest oblige all good Men to pay to one another; how different soever they are in some things from one another. For this is no more than all good Men do stand in need of, and have a just Claim to from one another.

To impress then this Gentleness of Christian Conversation, this Moderation, and *mutual Forbearance* in Love, which is the Duty and Right of every sincere Christian, I shall at present plead for it by several convincing *Questions*, such as never can be well answered, but by yielding to the Duty contended for. In which will be contained so many Arguments for



it. After which I shall answer some Objections, and add some Cautions.

*Quest. I.*

My First Question shall take its Rise from the Unity of the Body, and Church of Christ; which is not an Agreement in such and such Opinions, in this or that outward Form of Religion; not an Unity of *Knowledge*, or an Uniformity of *Worship*, but an Unity of *Spirit and Power*; and my Question shall be this. *Why should there not be a fair Correspondence, a free Converse, a mutual Forbearance, a hearty Love, and Brotherly Communion there, where there is a Vital Information by one and the same Spirit?* Good Men, they have all the Internal Union of the same Spirit; they have all the same Constituting, Specifying, and distinguishing Form of Christianity; they are all vitally quickened, lead, acted and informed by the same Spirit, and why then not a hearty Union and Communion, at least a mutual Long-Suffering and Forbearance in Love, among those that have all but one Common Soul?

We are taught 1 Cor. 12. 13. *that by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* The Scope of the Apostle in this Place is to let us know, that all the Saints  
taken



taken collectively, make up one Body. For as the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body being many, are one Body, so also is Christ. This he explains and proves thus; *by one Spirit they are all baptized into one Body, and have been made to drink into one Spirit.* The Force of his Argument is this, as in the Body of Man, the Soul, which is one in all the Parts, and all in every Part, and so makes them one Natural Body; so it is in the Body of Christ. The same Spirit is all in every Saint, and one in all the Saints, by which they become one Spiritual Body. The Unity of the whole Body, and of each particular Member in that Body, is founded in the Unity of the Spirit.

So again the Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8. 14. that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* We read it *led*, but the Word in the Original is *ἀγορευται*, as many as are acted, informed, Soul'd by the Spirit of God; not only led by him, as an External Guide, but acted by him as an Internal Principle: As the Soul acts the Body, as the Principle of Reason acts the Soul, as all things throughout Nature are acted and moved by their Essential Forms. And it is most evident, the Apostle speaks not this of an extraordinary and miraculous Presence of the Spirit, vouchsafed to God's Holy Prophets

and Servants, at some certain times, and upon some especial Occasions; but he speaks of something Specific and Formal to all God's Children as such; of something as intimate and Essential to the Sons of God, as Reason is to the Children of Men: As many as are *Soul'd* by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.

It is plain from these, and such like Scriptures that might be added, that the Unity of God's Church is an *Unity of Spirit* not of *Opinions, Modes and Forms* of Religion. An Unity of the same Spirit of Grace, not of the same Gifts, or of the same Measures of Grace from that Spirit.

To pursue this Question a little further; Surely, it is not simply better, that is, it is not better in it self, that Good Men should stand apart from one another. They do not better themselves by falling out with one another, no more than the Wrath of Man doth work the Righteousness of God. And if so, why is a Difference in a *less* Principle a better ground to quarrel and leave one another, than an Agreement in a *Greater*, in a *Chief* Principle is available to an happy Union and closing with one another, so far as is possible? Surely an Agreement in a main Principle, ought to be stronger to keep all good Men together in their Affections, to a mutual Service and Edification of  
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one another in Love, than any Difference in any other lesser matter should be to break them afunder, divide them and render them useleſs to one another, and a Prey to their Common Enemy.

We have no Diſpute among good Men about this *Unity of the Spirit*: It is granted by all that are enlightened and quickened by it. It is the Creating and Conſerving Principle that Rules in the Church of God. We acknowledge all Good Men to have their meaſures and ſhares of this Spirit together with ourſelves, enlightning, quickning and Governing them. But the things that divide us, are matters of Diſpute; things in which there is ſome Uncertainty, ſome Darkneſs, ſome Difficulty, and many of them things that may be ſpared, and yet true Religion no Loſer, but a Gainer by parting with them.

This is my Firſt Queſtion: Why not a fair Correſpondence, a free Converſe, a mutual Forbearance, a hearty Love and Brotherly Communion there, where there is a Vital Information by one and the ſame Spirit? and the Upſhot of this Queſtion is this; that all our private Notions, our particular Explications of Divine Matters, our various outward Obſervations, and our ſeparate Interests, ought to give Place to this All-comprehending Unity. That no Opinion or Practice  
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We have no Dispute among good Men about this *Unity of the Spirit*: It is granted by all that are enlightened and quickened by it. It is the Creating and Conserving Principle that Rules in the Church of God. We acknowledge all Good Men to have their measures and shares of this Spirit together with our selves, enlightning, quickning and Governing them. But the things that divide us, are matters of Dispute; things in which there is some Uncertainty, some Darkness, some Difficulty, and many of them things that may be spared, and yet true Religion no Loser, but a Gainer by parting with them.

This is my First Question: Why not a fair Correspondence, a free Converse, a mutual Forbearance, a hearty Love and Brotherly Communion there, where there is a Vital Information by one and the same Spirit? and the Upshot of this Question is this; that all our private Notions, our particular Explications of Divine Matters, our various outward Observations, and our separate Interests, ought to give Place to this All-comprehending Unity. That no Opinion or Practice  
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can be of God, that is inconsistent with this Unity. That all other Foundations, Rules, and Measures of Love and Communion which are laid in the Church of Christ, by Men exclusive of this, are no better than Schisms in the Body of Christ, and will at last come to nothing, and be confounded by the next Return, and pouring out of this Spirit upon the Church of Christ: which will certainly then Vindicate it self from all the Imitations of its true anointing; by which Imitations so many several Opinions and Formes have been set up contrary to this Unity. And that we should take heed how we confine and limit this Spirit, how we shut up this Spirit in any of our Notions and Opinions, in any outward Form, Way of Worship and Manner of Workings, and how we shut this Spirit out of any, out of which this Spirit hath not excluded himself. Who can foreknow and set the way; who can comprehend a Divine and an Infinite Spirit?

There are but two Spirits in the World, a good and an evil Spirit; and they are both got into all our Forms and Notions; and do at pleasure take them up, and lay them down. And the great Question is not what Opinion, or what Form we are *in*, or *out* of; but in which of these two *Spirits*, according to that famous Dicotomy; *We are of God, and the whole*



*whole World lies in the evil one. 1 John 5.19.* And we are to take heed how we confine the Divine Presence to any way we have chose, which is most agreeable to our own Imaginations, Fancies, and Expectations; throwing all out of the Favour and Work of God, that walk not with us.

There is a Case as my Lord Bacon observes, in which our Saviour positively tells us, *Luk. 11. 23. he that is not with us is against us*; and that is in the common Service of the good Spirit, and Interest, against the Evil one. Here none are exempted. Here there is to be no Neutrality, nor Trimmings here. He that is not with us is against us. But there is, says he, a Case of less Moment, in which our Lord defines this. *He that is not against us, is with us, Luke 9. 49, 50.* One of the Disciples saith to him, *Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbid him, because he followed not with us. And Jesus said unto him, forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.*

Without doubt, as learned, holy and humble Dr *Lightfoot* observes, upon this Passage in his *Hora Hebraica*, he was no Counterfeit that is here spoken of; but one that did truly, and really, and by a Divine Power cast out Devils, or else our Saviour had never said here what he doth, and again *Mark 9. 38, &c.* concerning him.

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Now you and I would be ready to ask, how could a Man that followed not Christ be able to cast out Devils; or how could a Man that cast out Devils be one that did not follow Christ. The same Person gives this Answer; and I give it because I cannot mend it. It is probable saith he, that he did not cast out these Devils in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, but of Christ and the Messiah, and that the Persons concerned did not yet know that this Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, but might be some Disciple of John, who was Baptized into the Name of the Messiah *forthwith to come*, although he did not know that Jesus of Nazareth was he; no more than John Baptist himself did, till it was revealed to him from Heaven; and in such a manner too, that it required some Confirmation, or at least Explanation, as appears by the Message which John afterwards sent to Christ, *art thou he or do we look for another.*

There are, as the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 12. 4. *Diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit; there are Differences of Administrations, but the same Lord; there are Diversities of Operations, but the same God which worketh all in all. And the Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.* We must take heed we do not lose the Unity of the same Spirit, of the same

same Lord, of the same God, in their own Diversity of Gifts, Differences of Administrations, and Diversity of Operations. And much more should we be careful, that none of our different Opinions and Practices should be to the Prejudice of this Unity of the Spirit, which ought to swallow up all good Men of all *Nations, People and Languages, of every Tongue and Kindred*: All Spirits, Consciences and Judgments, that by it are *baptized into one Body*; and that have been made to *drink into this one Spirit*; whatsoever Differences of Opinions may be found in their Understandings, and whatsoever different Modes of Religion may be found in their outward Practice; from the various measures and manners of the Communications of this one Spirit.

There are different measures and Attainments in the Church of Christ, and every one hath its proper Place, and the Divine Presence and Power going along with it. And these are not to be set one against the other; but to be all put together, as making one entire Strength against the Common Enemy: However, the inward Forms upon the Understanding, and the outward Forms of Practice, may vary among good Men, according to their different measures of Light. And we are to know, and to own one another according to the Spirit and  
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Power of Godliness, not the outward Form: Observing still in all our Christian Converses, this excellent *League* which our Saviour himself hath established, *He that is not against us is for us.*

Thy Brother, it may be, hath several Notions and Opinions very different from thine; but he is purifyed in Soul. He hath purifyed his Soul in obeying the Truth through this one Spirit; the Truth is written in his Heart, and shines forth in his Life. He hath learn'd and knows the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*: Altho he cannot yet receive it, as it is in *thee*; in thy Notion and Representation of it. His Soul is dyed, coloured, and figured with it, the Truth is transfiguring his whole Being in one beautiful and blessed Image with it self, is framing and fashioning his whole Man according to itself. This must needs be a better Proof that thy Brother is truly one with thee in the same Truth, than the highest Compliment and Flattery, he can pay to thy own Notions and Explanations, concerning it, by his Comprimisng with them can possibly be.

Whilst then we see the same Truths influencing and quickening the Soul, and spreading themselves thro the Lives of good Men of different Sentiments, and outward Observations in Religion; let us no more judge or esteem another by his Com-

Comprimising with our Sense of things, but by his Agreement with us in the *Power*, Efficacy and Spirit of Truth.

As we are to keep our own Souls pure and tender towards God, not defiling them even with such Religious Practices and Duties, &c. as we do not feel the Spirit leading us to; so we must be tender also of our Brother's Conscience, and not be an Instrument to draw him into any thing which the Lord leads him not into; but rejoice if we find him in the Simplicity of the same Spirit. We must be careful to preserve him from receiving any thing as from us, or to imitate any of our Practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides and perswades; for Persons are exceeding prone to receive things upon Trust, from those they have an high Opinion of, and to imitate their Practices without their Power; to the hurt of their own Growth.

How sweet and pleasant is it to the truly spiritual Eye, to see several sorts of Believers in the School of Christ, every one learning their own Lesson, performing their own particular Services, all owning and loving one another in their several Places and different Performances to their Master, to whom alone they give an account; and all by the Direction of the same Spirit, and not to quarrel with one another about their different

rent Practices. This is the true Ground and Rule of Love and Unity : Not that such a Man walks and does as I do ; but because he feels the same Spirit of Life in him, and that he walks in his own Rank, in his own Order, and proper Place of Subjection to the *same Spirit*. And this should be far more pleasing to us, than if he walkt just in the same Track with us. And so far as we are truly *Spiritual*, we cannot so much as desire he should do so, until he be apparently led thereto by the same Spirit which hath led us.

I shall close this Question with the Words following my Text. *I beseech you that you walk worthy of your Vocation with all Lowliness, and Meekness, with all Long-Suffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. There is one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of your Calling ; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, &c.* It is plain from this Scripture, that the Unity of the Church of God is an Unity of Spirit : An Unity in that Spirit which is the common Soul of the Church ; the great Specifying, Constituting, and Con-serving Principle of all true Christianity. We are not united to Christ and to one another, by the same Opinions and Forms, but by one and the same Spirit. Nor  
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can any Opinion or Form divide us from Christ; and therefore ought not to separate us from one another, if they have not in their own Nature an Enmity to the *Heavenly* Image of Christ, which is *Spirituality*; or to the *Natural* Image of him, which is *Morality*.

How plain is it again from this Scripture, that the Bond of Peace hath its Strength and Root not in an Unity of *Opinion*, or Uniformity of *Worship*, but in the Unity of the *Divine Spirit*. Where the Unity is kept by a Bond, there a Multiplicity is clearly signified, saith one. Now the Bond of Peace to this Multiplicity hath its Root, and its Strength in this Unity of the *Spirit*: As the Union and Sympathy of all the Fellow-Members in the *Natural* Body arise from, and is preserved by one Soul, by the Unity of the *Soul*. There is one Soul that quickens, moves and governs all the Members of the *Natural* Body; and how unnatural and monstrous would it be; because all those several Members are not like one another in their outward Figure, Shape or Operation, that therefore they should quarrel one with another. Tho the Hand doth not move as the Foot, nor the Foot as the Hand, yet it is the same Soul makes the Hand to work, and the Foot to walk, and every Member to move in its proper Place

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and Capacity, for the Service and good of the whole. And thus it is, and should be in the Body of Christ: In which every Member hath one and the self same Spirit, which comprehends, quickens, moves and governs it according to its own proper Place, and use in the Body of Christ, whatever Differences there may be of inward Measures, and outward Forms. The Soul, tho it acts severally in the several Members of the Body, yet it is but one and the same Soul, wonderfully diffusing and enlarging it self to all the Capacities and Indigencies of the Body, itill remaining entire in it self. And so it is the same Spirit which works in all Good Souls severally, and as it pleaseth.

Peace is an Agreement, an agreeable Union, a Love-Union, an Harmony, that consists in the Union of Spirits and Things: This is Peace. Unity is the Band of this Peace: The Band of all Agreement, of all Unions, of all Harmonies, in Union and in Love. This Unity is a peculiar Property and Character of the Spirit, who is the first Union, and so the Fountain of all Unions, of all Loves, which consist in Union.

*St Paul, with admirable Reason, joins these two together here; our walking with all Lowliness, and Meekness, with Long-Suf-*

*Suffering, forbearing one another in Love; and our keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Band of Peace.* The way then to preserve this Unity of the Spirit in the Body of Christ, is, to walk towards one another with all Lowliness and Meekness, and Long-Suffering, forbearing one another in Love: Not to be Proud, Haughty, Eager and Peevish, imposing our own Notions and Modes of Religion upon one another: Nor do I believe there can be any sufficient Reason given, why our particular and private Notions, Sentiments, and Practices, should be to the Prejudice of this Unity, which ought to be a most universal and strong *Bond of Peace*, throughout the whole Body of Christ.

### *Quest. II.*

The Second Question shall be taken from the Common Concern, Circumstances and Interests of all Good Men: And it shall be this. *Why art thou so forward to Judge and Censure, to Disown and Cast off thy differing, dissenting, mistaken or fallen Brother, when thou dost not know thine own Errors, thy own Dangers, and thy own Temptations: And art, it may be, so little able to speak home to the Matter which makes thee offended with thy Brother?*



Why dost thou insist so much upon Differences there, where thou thy self hast reason to be timorous, and afraid peremptorily to assert; as being conscious there is some Obscurity in the Matter? Surely when it comes to be a Case of any Uncertainty, it is but reasonable every one should enjoy his own Opinion. Let me tell such a Man, thou darest not venture thy Salvation upon such a Truth, for denying of which thou Condemnest thy Brother; thou darest not say it is impossible it should be an Error; thou dost not arrogate to thy self all the Fullness of the Spirit of Truth; thou canst not say but thy Brother may have some Illuminations of that Spirit as well as thy self. Why then dost thou set thy Brother at naught, and give him no Allowance at all, and have no Consideration of God's Respect to him, and of his Interest in God; but gives thy self all manner of Allowance?

Tell me how comest thou to think thy self to be an infallible Judge of thy Brother's Errors and Mistakes, who art but a Fallible Discerner of Truth for thy self? Why art thou so hasty in charging thy Brother with false Notions, whilst thou thy self art not exempted from Mistakes? Doth the Sun shine no where but in at thy Window? Are all Men  
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in Darkness besides thy self? Upon a better Consideration of the Matter, it will be found, that thy own Light is not without a great Mixture of *Darkness*, nor thy Brother's Darkness without a good Mixture of *Light*. Sure I am, all our Notions of Spiritual things here below, are at best but as a Twilight, in which Light and Darkness meet and shake Hands: And how fond and unreasonable is it, whilst they own Light is shaded with so much Darkness, to think there is no Mixture of Light with thy Brother's Darkness?

Thou dost in a general way frequently confess the Weakness of thy own Understanding, the Narrowness and Shortness of thy own Apprehensions in Spiritual things; what a poor dark Creature thou art? Whence then are the particular Expressions of thy own Opinions and Sense to others, so Positive and Oracular? Thou bemoanest daily thy own Ignorance before God, and beggest from him that thou may'st understand thy own Errors, and that he would further reveal his Mind and clear up Matters to thee; why then art thou so Confident and so severe in thy Carriage to thy Dissenting Brother, as if thou wert Omniscient? Thou daily ownest thy self in the Notion, to be a poor

fallible Creature, how then in thy practice dost thou take upon thee as if thou wert Infallible, and exempted from all possibility of Mistake? Is not this to live in a continual Contradiction to, and Confutation of thy self?

How strange and absurd a thing is this, if it were well considered, to see a good Man one Hour of the Day upon his Knees, bewailing to God his own Ignorance, Folly and Miscarriages; and in another Hour of the Day sitting in the Judgment Seat with Confidence and Scorn, Judging, Censuring and Condemning his Differing, Mistaken and Fallen Brother? and yet how commonly is this to be found among us?

Thou hast thy Measure of Truth, but thou hast also thy Share of Error. And how little is thy Portion of Truth, if it were singled out from all those Mistakes with which it is mingled? How unreasonable then is it whilst thy own Light hath so much Darkness in it, to think, as was said before, there is no Light in his Darkness?

Consider well in this Case, what the Apostle saith to us all, 1 Cor. 8. 2. *If any Man think he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know it.* Examine then thy own State as it becomes thee, and thou wilt find little Cause to  
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Glory and Triumph over thy poor Brother.

The same Apostle bids us, *Rom. 12. 10.* to be kindly affectioned one to another, with Brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another. And *Eph. 5. 18, 19, &c.* to Verse 21. he tells us, this is a Proof of our being filled with the Spirit; *being not drunk with Wine, saith he, wherein is Excess; but be filled with the Spirit.* And how doth this Fulness of the Spirit express it self? He goes on and tells us, *speaking to our selves in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs; Singing and making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord; giving Thanks always for all things to God the Father, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Submitting your selves to one another in the Fear of God.*

Observe it, there is no full Stop from those Words, *Verse 18. be ye filled with the Spirit,* until ye come to the end of those Words *Verse 29. Submitting your selves to one another in the Fear of God.* So that our Apostle here places our being fill'd with the Spirit in these Three things.

1. In a Chearful and Rejoicing Frame of Spirit.

2. In a Thankfvl Frame of Spirit; and that for all things. And,

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3. In a Submission of our selves to one another in the Fear of God.

And he doth not here mean the *Civil* Submission which Inferiours owe to Superiours, of Subjects to Governours, of Children to Parents, of Servants to Masters. Neither doth he mean that *Ecclesiastical* Subjection of which he speaks, *Heb. 13. 17. obey them that have the Rule over you in the Lord.* But he speaks of a *mutual Brotherly* Subjection that all Christians owe to one another; and especially the Highest and Strongest to the Meanest and Weakest. According to that *2 Pet. 5. 5. ye all of you be subject to one another; and be cloathed with Humility, for God resists the Proud and giveth Grace to the Humble.* We are all to be subject to one another; bearing one another's Infirmities and Burthens of Ignorance, Passion, Weaknesses, Mistakes and Temptations, as the Apostle speaks on the like Occasion *Rom. 15. 1. We then that are strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves; but every one his Neighbour for his Good to Edification.*

We are angry at another for dissenting from us. We think he calls in question the Pregnancy of our Mind, and  
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the Sufficiency of our Understanding. Why then do we give *no* Allowance to our Brother? Why have we no Opinion of his Judgment, and so *great* a one for our own?

*Job 31. 13.* *Job* in a less Case than that before us, concludes: *If I did despise the Cause of my Man-Servant, or my Maid-Servant, when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up; and when Visited, what shall I answer him?* If this was the Behaviour of a good Master to his Servants when they contended with him; and if this gentle and condescending Behaviour to his Servants proceeded from the Fear of God, whose Servant he himself was; how unaccountable to our Common Master, must our despising of our differing Brother, and Fellow-Servant be? For we are all upon a Level, and Fellow-Servants in our Spiritual Capacities.

This is my second Question, and the genuine Effect of it is this; That all Good Men, and especially every Man that pretends to a greater Measure of the Spirit than others: Every Man that would approve himself to be filled with the Spirit, should in Matters of Difference between him and his Brother, act like those that have a Sense of the Fallibility and Peccability of every Creature,  
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of the best Men on Earth. For we are neither in the Virtue of our *Creation*, nor of our *Reparation* exempted from Errors and Miscarriages. We expect this Perfection in the *Consummation*. And that in the mean time, we carry it like those that have a due Respect to their differing Brother; preferring him before our selves, and submitting our selves so far as is possible to him.

And this is the best way to approve our selves to be filled with the Spirit; whose *Fruits* are said to be Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, and Meekness, Gal. 5. 22. And not by our High Notions, and bitter Zeal for our own Opinions, and Forms of Religion. And it is because we are no more filled with this Spirit which is the *Spring*, the *Centre*, the *Circle*, the *Band* of all good Spirits in Heaven and on Earth, that we are no more in this Condescension to one another.

### Quest. III.

My *Third* Question shall be taken from the Agreement we see every where, but among Christians. And it shall be this.

*Why do they who differ in more things, and agree in fewer, live better together, than*  
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*Christians who Meet in more, and differ in fewer things?* Surely Variance and Strife, is not simply better, than Concord and Love. It is not desiræable for its own sake. Who can answer this Question? I will give you some Instances.

Take a Man that is seasoned with the Grace of God, and a Man of Natural and Common Ingenuity; these two agree, and live happily together. There is no Difference between them; and yet these differ more, than two Christians, two gracious Persons. Why then should not they who agree in the Reality of Religion, and differ *per pauciora*, as we say, in *Fewer things*, live better together than any other in the World?

Again, Two *Good-natur'd* Men; they live handsomely together, Kindness is return'd with Kindness: And yet the Foundation of this Union is nothing but *Natural* Ingenuity in them both: But the Foundation of the Union of Christians is the same Grace of God, the same Divine Nature in them all, over and above their Natural Ingenuity.

Tell me, O Christian! shall the Grace of God? shall the Participation of a *Divine* Nature, fall short of the Common Ingenuity of *Humane* Nature? yea, even in its *lapsed* State? what can be answered to this? and are you *worse* natured  
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to one another, because God hath been *better* to you than to others? Or must you needs be thus bad, to shew the Greatness of that Love of God you are still receiving, but never imitating? Doth the Grace and Forgiveness of God want this Commendation from you? Is it possible to receive this Grace, and not be improv'd and better'd by it? What can mend the Naughtiness of our Dispositions? What can cure us of the Anger, the Severity, the Crabbedness, the Soweriness, that is in our Tempers? if the Grace of God cannot do it? How can any Man think the Grace he hath received is available to a Supernatural Effect? if it be not sufficient to the curing of a Natural One. How can any Man flatter himself he hath received the Grace of God to a Participation of a Divine Image, and yet this Grace leaves him short of the degenerate natural One? surely that which is a Thousand times more, doth not leave that undone which is unspeakably less.

It is true indeed, the Grace of God is conferred many times upon the most untoward, crooked and crabbed pieces of Nature: But shall they continue so, after they have received that Grace? Grace is given to such, to shew it is *free*; but if they remain such, where is  
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the *Power* and Efficacy of that Grace? If the Grace of God don't mend our Natures, what shall? or shall it, however, make us worse natured than other Men? Shall the Doctrine that commands us to love our Enemies; to bless them that curse us; to pray for them that persecute us; to do Good for all the Evil we meet with in this unkind and angry World, shall this Doctrine allow us to beat and devour one another? Shall the Doctrine that comes to bring Peace on Earth, and Good-will from Heaven to Men, make us unkind to, and angry with one another? do we thus approve our selves to be under the Grace of God, to be more peevish and Self-confident, than the rest of the World? if Grace cannot sweeten, and refine our Natures, and enlarge our Hearts towards all our Brethren, yea, to all our Fellow Creatures, which is no more than this Grace requires of us, what can? He that pretends to the Grace of God, and to the clearer and sweeter Discoveries of it than his Brethren; I would have him approve himself to be the most ingenuous and best Natured Man alive, and to think it a Scandal to himself, and to his Christianity, that a Man of meer Morality and good Humour, should exceed him in Love and Goodness.

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Sure I am, if we had ever a Man among us, that did live exactly a Gospel-Life, he would be the most Lovely, the most Serviceable, and Benign Man in the World, and he would thereby greatly recommend Christianity to it. For the Rule of the Gospel is the *Expression of the Heavenly Life* and Love; and this Man would bring it into act; would, as I may say, *Incaruate* it, give it a *Body*, as *Plato* speaks, and make it visible and lovely to all Eyes.

*Titus 3. 2.* We are exhorted to be gentle, shewing all Meekness unto all Men; for we our selves were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful and hating one another; till the Kindness and Love of God toward Man appeared. Can we be Peevish and Churlish unto one another, unto our Brethren, under the Manifestation of this Kindness and Love of God to our own Souls? who can behold *Jesus Christ* in the Beauty, Majesty and Love of his Divine Nature? which is an Infinite Beauty, an Infinite Majesty, an Infinite Love, coming down to a poor Soul in its lost and loathed State, manifesting himself and his Love to it, taking it into his Bosom, and embraces, as a Bridegroom doth his Bride; who can be this happy and blessed Soul, and not be amazed

zed, and quite vanish before so much Greatness and Goodness into its Self-Nothingness. The Disproportion between so high an Excellency and this Soul, most effectually abaseth it, and makes it the least and the lowest of all things in its own Eyes: The Divine Condescensions to this Soul, teaches it now to stoop to the least of its Brethren; yea, to the lowest, the most lost and loathsome Creatures; to receive them into the Glory of God if it knew how, as *Jesus-Christ* hath received it.

We may indeed pretend, that our Anger against our differing Brother is Zeal for God, and his Truth; but it is nothing so. For God and his Truth need none of that Anger, as the Apostle tells us, *Jam. 3. 13, 14. Who is a wise Man and endued with Knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good Conversation, his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if you have bitter Envyng, (the Word in the Greek is, bitter Zeal) glory not, saith he, lye not against the Truth; this Wisdom descends not from above; but is Earthly, Sensual and Devilish.* If you have bitter Envyng, bitter Zeal, do not Glory herein, do not call this Grace, and Religion, and the Spirit of the Gospel, and Zeal for God. This is one of the greatest Lies that can be made against the Truth. The true Zeal



Zeal *eats up* a Man's *self*; but I am sure it doth not Bite and *devour another*.

Luke 9. 54. When the Disciples desir'd of Christ that they might call for Fire from Heaven, to destroy the *Samaritans*, because they would not suffer Christ to enter into their City, our Lord turn'd to them, and rebuked them, and said, *you know not what manner of Spirit you are of*. Which Words of our Saviour, I humbly think may have this double Sense.

*First* You know not, O my Lambs, what this Spirit you are now in is; this particular Temper and Heat of yours, you think it is Zeal for me; but I tell you it is a *strange* Spirit to me and you: Or,

*Secondly*, You know not what Spirit you are of. You do not yet know what your own proper, genuine, and true Spirit, the Spirit out of which you sprung, is, which is the Spirit of Love and Forgiveness, not of Anger, Wrath and Revenge. This calling for Fire from Heaven, is not the Spirit of him who came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. This is not the Spirit of him who was a Sacrifice of Love for those that Crucified him: who in the first Place gave his  
Blood

Blood to those bitter Spirits to drink; that did with the greatest Rage pour it out; and whose last Breath when he dyed, was spent in Kindness, Love and Forgiveness, to them who put him to Death; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:* and go preach the Gospel, saith he, after his Resurrection to every Creature, *Beginning at Jerusalem*; which of all Places, we in our little narrow and stingy Minds, would have thought should have been excepted, or at least postponed, *viz.* Go preach the Gospel round the World to every Creature, and at last come to these Wicked *Jews*.

This Spirit you are now in, is not the Spirit of the *Gospel*, which is a Fountain of Love and Forgiveness; this is not the Spirit of the Spouse of Christ; of his Dove, which hath Milk and Honey under her Tongue; Divine Wisdom, Peace and Joy, as a Fountain of Milk and Honey in her Heart. Gentle Language, Meekness, Healing, Peace-making Words, as Streams of Milk and Honey under her Tongue, flowing from the Fountain of Divine Love in her Heart.

To shut up this Question; why do they who differ in more things, and agree in fewer, live better together, than Christians who meet in more, and differ in fewer? If the Instances I have

E given

given be too little to this purpose, what say you to this? Brethren in Iniquity, agree better every where, than Brethren in Christianity; and yet the Foundation of their Union is a *Lie*. To go further, *Sævi inter se conveniunt Ursi*, would Bears and Beasts of Prey agree very well among themselves; and shall the Grace of God make us worse to one another than *Cannibals*, which do not eat one another? shall Christians be worse to one another than Beasts of Prey, which do not devour one another of a kind? shall *Christianus* be *Christiano Lupus*? yea, Christian worse than Wolf to Christian?

Shall I rise higher? the very *Devils* themselves, whatsoever Distinction and Diversity of Forms there is among them, yet they are all united and agreed against all Men. In good Truth, I know not how to shame you any further. Who can answer these things? are the Principles of Religion super-induced upon other Engagements, so as to be a Cause of Differences? shall we give Occasion to have it said, that Men would have lived well together in the World, if Christianity had not disturbed it; as if Christianity was an ill natur'd thing; which gives us the highest Discovery, the greatest Example of Love that ever was, or can be exhibited to the World.

And



And becaule this is in good earnest said, I will close this Question with an Answer to a Text of Scripture, that is brought in by some to justify this Censure upon the Christian Religion, as if it came to make Strife and Contention in the World, and also to reply to a great and general Instance that is given to this purpose.

The Text of Scripture is that *Matth. 10. 34, 35. I came not, saith Christ, to send Peace on Earth but a Sword; for I am come to set a Man at Variance against his Father, and the Daughter against the Mother, &c.* To this I give these Answers.

1. Our Saviour tells us, not what would be according to his *Intention*, but *Consequentially*, through the Malice and Perverseness of Men. Men, rather than entertain the Gospel, would put the World into Combustion. He speaks of what would fall out through the Stubborness of Men.

2. Our Saviour in this Scripture speaks of the Energy of the Gospel, where it comes in Power, and takes Place. Men upon whom the Spirit of the Gospel seized, rather than not fulfil it, would contest with their nearest Relations. The Gospel where it comes in the Power of it, would dissolve the nearest and strongest

Relations, and cause them to trample them under their Feet, as they stand in their way up to God. Therefore it follows in that Scripture *Verse 37. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c.*

3. The Variance our Saviour speaks of here, should not be of those into whom the Spirit of the Gospel should enter, among themselves, but between them and Worldlings. The Variance between those that are of God, and those that are of the World.

The general Instance that is observed to the Reproach of Christianity upon this Account, is this; 'Tis observed that there never was such Contentions in the World, as since Christ came into it. Histories of every Age, since Christ's Time, shew the Church hath been the most unsettled part of the World; that *Christianity* at this Day is most of all torn to pieces, and that not by Strangers, but her own pretended Sons. To this I give this Answer.

I. That Differences and Debates in Religion are not altogether such Fatal and Destructive things, as we are apt to think they are.

I. They

1. They speak Men *Active*, and upon Inquiry after Truth: Which is more hopeful, than dead sluggish Ignorance, which never comes to any thing. But whilst Men are up, and in pursuit after Truth, we may expect that they will light upon something at length. One Age since Christ we account as good as lost, because of Men's Ignorance and Non-Action in it. As the Ignorance and Dulness of former Times, gave a Rise to Popery, so there is nothing more against the Soul and Spirit of it, than searching into Truth, and laying out for particular Knowledge.

2. Debates do *brighten* Truth, and make Men expert. As Filings brighten Gems; so Contention and Disputes En-  
lighten Truth. Men learn Skill to defend Truth, and to convince of Error by them. Men are most settled and resolved in Truth by them.

3. God *tries* us by them: They are good for the Exercise, Trial and Proof of Men, that they have not bowed to *Baal*; that they hold not the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*; that they are not gone back to the Law; that they have not received the Mark of the Beast in their *Foreheads*, by Opinion and Profession; nor in their *Hands* by Actions.



4. They are sometimes good Opportunities to the People of God, to be his *Witnesses* against the Errors of the World by sound Judgment; and against the Profaneness of it, by Holiness of Life. They sometimes put the Case of Martyrdom, which is the best way of going out of the World, when God calls us to it, and the highest Honour he can bestow upon us in this World; to give us an Opportunity to part with that Life for him out of Choice, which we must part with of Necessity; of making that Life a Sacrifice to him, which must be paid as a Debt to Nature. This by the way, in Answer to that Scripture, and to that Instance.

Thus much shall serve for my Third Question; Why they who differ in more things, and meet in fewer, agree better than Christians that meet in more and differ in fewer. Surely Anger and Strife is not desirable for its own sake. There is no true Pleasure in Variance: No it is in it self the most burthensome thing in the World to a *good-natur'd* Man; and it should be most of all so to a *Christian*.

[ There being Room for another Particular in Answer to the foregoing Question, it is supplied as follows.

5. But

5. But the Humane Reason in its Searchings, be better than a stupid Dulness and Lethargy in Religion; and when weilded in Disputation by a *Paul*, may be of excellent Use; yet when vi-tiated by Carnal Principles, and infected by evil Suggestions, as in a blind and obdinate *Jew*, or a perverse and ignorant Christian, the Abuse of it becomes most pernicious. When Carnal Wisdom disputes, when Self-Interest disputes, when Worldly Credit disputes, when Passion, Wrath, and Malice disputes, this is, in Religion, of near Kin with the Devil's contending about the Body of *Moses*, when the *Soul* was flown. The Enemy as he has a Part in all, so has a Footing in the Rational Faculty of Man; and there raises his Mists, and in 'em fights against the Divine Light; or by Subtleties, Fallacies, Imaginations, fine Glosses and false Appearances, perverts and disguises the Truth; or getting into the Will, make *That* pass for *Reason*; *pro Ratione Voluntas*: And the least Opposition strikes Fire immediately, and so he carries on the War; *Antichrist* against *Jesus Christ*; in the Souls of Men first, and thence to outward Manifestation. Antichrist Wars here as the *False Prophet*, by setting up his Post against God's Post; dressing up a Religion outward instead of inward, Letter instead of Spirit,

rit, Form instead of Power : As in the Denomination of the *Beast*, he Wars by Sensuality and Brutal Lusts, driving on to the Extinction both of Natural Affection to Man and Regard of God ; and so proceeds to Fierceness and Violence, as *Partaking* of the Power of the *Dragon* ; which chiefly consists in Wrathful Contention, Rage and Persecution, for sake of what is thus set up.

And hence also we are to account for the so abounding Strife and Division under the Gospel State. Antichrist is by the Divine Permission, allotted his Time, and the Spirit of this World its Course ; and still the Wisdom of God is working underneath for Good to be wrought out of all ; which Good will be,

1. The Manifestation of Antichrist in his secret Workings, and hidden *Mystery* of Iniquity.

2. The Display of Arts and Sciences, of Truth Spiritual and Natural, in the Diversity of its Branches, and Variety of its Distinctions, purged from its Mixtures, and vindicated from its adhering Errors or Imitations.

3. The Tryal of the Saints, by means of Temptation, giving them Opportunities,



nities of various Conquests, and Enlargement of their Crown, to the great Glory of God in the Conduct of his Divine Wisdom and Providence.

*Lastly*, The more Signal and Glorious Overthrow of Antichrist, after he has tryed his full Strength, and done his worst: When he shall see himself baffled in all his Projects; cast out of his Sphere in Man, and his Seat in the Temple of God; and be at last destroyed by the *Breath* of God's *Power*; and that *Wisdom* which is from *above*, which is *Pure* and *Peaceable*, at the coming of the Lord in his *Spiritual Kingdom*.]

#### Quest. IV.

My Fourth Question shall be taken from the several Ages, Growths, Measures and Attainments of good Minds. And it is this; *Why art thou so forward to judge, to censure, to disown, to cast off, thy differing, mistaken, thy fallen Brother, when thou art so little able to comprehend all the different Ages and Growths of good Souls; to understand the various Improvements, Measures and Attainments, the several Capacities, Languages and Operations which are pecaliar to their Ages and Growths; and knowest not all the Imperfections which may belong to a Good Man here below?*

It

It is indeed impossible for us to see the Bounds to Spiritual things, to Stint that Spirit in our selves or others, which is a Fountain of Divine Light and Life, in all Regenerate Souls ; continually sending forth new Streams, and running along with a continual Succession of Waters, without any Stop or Limit, till they carry us as high as their Fountain Head. We know not the highest, or the Lowest State that a Child of God can be in : And therefore should be very careful how we *condemn* that which is above us, or *contemn* that which is below us. As he that is *below* thee, cannot tell the *Maximum quod sit* ; the highest Administration of God ; so neither canst thou that art *above* him, tell the *Minimum quod sit*, how Low God can be. We are too *Proud* to understand the Condescensions, too *Low* to take the Heights, too *Shallow* to fathom the Depths, too *Narrow* to measure the Breadths, and too *Short* to reach the Heights of the Divine Truth and Goodness ; and their various Communications of themselves to us. We cannot assign the highest, or lowest State of Saints, whilst they are here below. We cannot say all above this is Fancy, Whimsy, Dream and Delusion ; or all below it is Common, Carnal, Formal and Superstitious. As we ought not then to despise that which

which is below us, so let us not censure that which is above us; but wait to overtake it. Blessed be God, all good Souls in the midst of their greatest Differences from one another here below, do all meet in the Divine Comprehension above; they are all Infolded in the Divine Arms, they are all incircled in the Divine Love; that hath Heights, and Depths, and Breadths, and Lengths enough to reach and to hold us all. And if we cannot yet receive and embrace each other in our several Ages, Measures, Growths and Attainments, it is because we have little, low, dark, narrow, and contracted Hearts, which feel but little of the Love of Christ; and are no more filled with that Spirit which is the Spring, the Centre, the Band of all good Spirits in Heaven and Earth.

There is as great Difference in the Stature of Souls, as of Bodies. In the Growths of Christians as of Men, and of all other things. So that St *John*, 1 *John* 2. 12, 13, 14. twice together distinguishes their Growths into *little Children*, *young Men*, and *Fathers*, that we may take the more distinct Notice of them.

Art thou then one of the tallest among thy Brethren? Shew then the Height of thy Spiritual Discoveries and Enjoyments, by the Depth of thy Condescension to the lowest and least of thy Brethren



thien; for the true Stature of any thing cannot be exactly taken, without measuring from *both* ends

Art thou a *Strong* Man in Christ? Shew thy Strength by bearing the *Burthen* of thy weak Brother, and so fulfil the Law of Christ, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal. 6. 2.*

Art thou a *Father* in the Holy Understanding? Shew the Greatness of thy Knowledge and Experience by thy Fatherly Bowels and Tenderneſs toward the Meek and Little Ones; and the Wandring Ones too. If thou art within the Compaſs of the loweſt of theſe Growths, if thou art become as a little Child in Chriſt, ſhew it by thy genuine Inſtinct, and Naturalneſs of Soul towards God and all Divine things, which is Eſſential to, and inſeparable from the new Birth in its moſt Infant State: And ſhew it not by judging and cenſuring what is above thee, but by waiting and longing to underſtand the Truth, and to reliſh the Goodneſs of it.

Conſider again, it is impoſſible, as I have elſewhere told the World, to have full and comprehensive Notions and Conceptions of Spiritual Truths, whiſt we are in this diſtant and divided State. Our Knowledge here below is not only dark, but *partial*, as *Paul*, with excellent reaſon puts theſe two together, *1 Cor. 13. 12.*

For

For we see through a Glass darkly, we know but *in part*, or in division *ἐκ μέρους*. It is indeed the *Partiality* of our Knowledge which causes and increases the Darkneſs and the Difficulties of it, and turns it into a *Riddle*. That will be plain, eaſy and pleaſant to us, when we come at once to ſee the whole Body of Divine Truths; when we ſhall in one View, behold the fair Frame and Univerſal Harmony of it, the admirable Coherence and Connexion, the Proportion, Conſent, and Sympathy of one Truth with another, and of each Truth with every Truth: Which being now ſeen alone, puzzles, perplexes, intangles, and Labyrinths us. Spiritual Truths are now Enigma's to us, becauſe we know but *in part*. All our preſent Notions and Opinions are but *broken* things, are but little pieces of Truth, we are all running away with Bits and Scraps of Spiritual Truth: Every one calling his own ſhare the entire Purchase; But we know but *in Diviſion*, and we know not how to put things together. Some are zealous for one, others for another part of Divine Truth; while we contend for one, we are apt to let go another; while we are ſeeking after one, we loſe another; we continually Miſtake one another, and the Truth in  
each

each other, through our Partial Discoveries of things.

We have so much Light, so much Knowledge as through the Darknes and Ignorance mingled with it, and as yet prevailing over it, serves to wrangle, dispute and quarrel with one another; but not Light enough to receive and comprehend one another.

We have indeed a Notion of the *Indivisibility* of Truth, and we are sure of it in the *Theory*; but we know not how to make it out in our *Practice*. It is true, That is not Truth which cannot dwell with any, with every other Truth. But all Truth is not thus reconciled in the Head of any good Man on Earth, altho it be in every good Man's Heart. He is in Love with all Truth, but he hath not yet found out the whole Compass and Circle of it. Truth is One in *it self*, but it is broken into I know not how many pieces as it is *in us*; and those *pieces* through the Darknes mixt with them in our Spirits, are fighting one against the other. The next State will give us a clear and comprehensive View of things. All our present *Division* of Truth and Spirits too, will then be at an end; those Truths, those Spirits shall then be reconciled and run into the Embraces of one another, that seem now to stand at the greatest Distance and Defiance.



fiance. Then the Darkneſs ſhall no more predominate over the Light, nor employ it thus unnaturally to contend againſt it ſelf: But the Light running together from all Parts, and every where mingling with it ſelf, ſhall ſwallow up all the Darkneſs and the Diviſion which hath ſprung out of it.

But we have now only a *glimmering* Proſpect of this future Happineſs, it is impoſſible here to attain to a full View of the whole Face of Truth, which is great and glorious as God. All our preſent Notions and Opinions are too narrow, too contracted to take in thoſe innumerable Rays and Beams of Divine Truth, which are every where ſcatter'd and diſpers'd among the Children of Light. Thou haſt one little part of it in thy Notions and Opinions, thy Brother another in his; inſtead of under- valuing his Share, it would become us much better to acknowledge the Shortneſs of our own; and to ſay of God with *Job* on another occaſion not much different, *Job 26. 14. Lo theſe are parts of his Ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him.*

Let us then ſeriously conſider how exceeding *broad* the Law of God is, and how *ſcanty* and ſhallow our Capacities are. Let us ſeriously conſider the *Heights* and *Depths* of Divine Truths, and the

*Short-*

*Shortness* and *Shallowness* of our own Understanding. Let us seriously consider how impossible it is for us to comprehend the several Degrees and Growths of good Spirits. And let us take heed how we shut any of Christ's little ones out of our Hearts; or think on the other hand, there is nothing beyond what we have attained. Let us not make our Measure the Standard to others. Let us not call our Rays, our Beams, our Glances of the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ, that Kingdom it self, which is never to be shaken, tho all our *Notions of it may be*.

We have all the Name, the Notion of the Kingdom of God among us, and I hope some little of the Power; but alas, so besmear'd with Darkness, Ignorance and Folly, that we have more Cause to be humbled in our selves, than to be exalted above our Brethren. They that have most are most of all sensible of their own Poverty and Shortness: Sure I am, in our present Forwardness and Frowardness, we are so opposite to that Kingdom we pretend to wait for, that we have Cause to fear when it comes forth in Truth and Power, we shall not be able to stand before it: Sure I am, we cannot, in the Spirit and Temper that the present even Reformed Churches are now in.

Had

Had we a sober and real Sense of our own Vileneſs and Uncleanneſs, and of the Purity and Maſteſty of that Kingdom, we ſhould then hide our ſelves in our own Shame, be always ready to confeſs our own Darkneſs; but ever afraid to condemn, to contemn, and to caſt off our Brethren. O how undue and unjuſt muſt thy *Claim* to that whole Kingdom be, from ſo little a Share as thou haſt of it? and how unreaſonable muſt thy *Excluſion* of thy Brother out of it be, when thou thy ſelf art, it may be, but *looking* towards it, at moſt but *Entered* into it. It is well if thou haſt truly ſet thy Face towards it, but if thou haſt got never ſo far into it, ſure I am, Anger and Wrath, Enmity and Contention, about Meats and Drinks, and Matters of the like Moment, are not the Arguments of that Kingdom; but Righteouſneſs, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. My Friends, it is impoſſible for us to determine *this* is the higheſt, or *that* is the loweſt State God can be in. There is nothing ſo high, but God is ſtill above it. There is nothing ſo low, but God is ſtill beneath it; it doth not yet appear, ſaith St *John*, what we ſhall be, ſo great and glorious is that Kingdom God hath prepared for us, and yet in its *firſt* Entrance into us, it is compared by our Saviour to the *leaſt* of Seeds. And how



hard is it in its first Growth to distinguish it from Common Grace? How short a thing would Heaven be of what we shall find it hereafter, if it were no more than we can now comprehend; and how few would ever come there, if no more were in the right and safe way thither, than we can allow to be so? It is well for us all, that we are all better known to God, than to our selves or to one another.

How ignorant are we of *Nature* it self in her most Ordinary Operations, and much more in her most subtle and hidden Energies? And how much less are we able to follow all the Tracts, the Steps, the Methods of *Grace*? It is God only who comprehends all the ways and Motions of the Spirits of his Children, and themselves too in himself.

If all the Saints now in Heaven should drop down into the midst of us, and relate to us the Fruitions which their unveiled Souls have in the Bosom of an unveiled God, how little would the most illuminated Souls amongst us understand of their Discourse? We must go up to that State above, to know what they enjoy. For the Glory of that State can only be known *per animæ tactum & interiorem gustum*, by an inward Touch or Taste of it. And thus to *know* it, is to be in it. There is also a right *Language* which

which is as difficult to us to understand, because it is so much beneath us, we know not what to make of it; it is so broken, so confused, so imperfect, so full of Signs, and so like the Gibberish of a little Infant. But God, who is the *Father* of it, understands what it would have, and knows what it only strives to speak, but cannot express. We are great Strangers to our selves, and to one another: But God, who searcheth the Hearts, knoweth us all, and what is the meaning of his own Spirit in us, when we can but sigh and groan.

To draw towards a Conclusion of this Question: Let us then in all our Converses with our different Brethren, allow still for the several Ages and Growths of good Minds. Let us always remember, that every Truth is not spoken *at once* to every good Man; nor any Truth opened to him in its *full* Glory at the first sight. But as *Luther* speaks, we are enlightened *Beam by Beam*. It is said of some things our Saviour did, and which were done unto him, that his Disciples understood them not *at first*, but when Christ was Glorified, when he took away his Fleahly Presence, and came in more Spirit; then they were acquainted with them. What I do, saith Christ to *Peter, John 13. 7.* thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. And *John*

16. 12, 13. tells his Disciples, he had yet many things to say unto them, but they *could not bear them then*, how be it when the Spirit of Truth would come, he should *guide them into all Truth*. When St Paul was a little before-hand caught up into that World which is yet to come, the Text saith, 2 Cor 12. 4. that he heard *unspeakable Words which it is not lawful for a Man to utter*, that *could not*, that *might not* be spoken; such things that would no doubt have offended the best Men alive, if they had been then delivered.

Good Souls have their several Orbs and Spheres of Spiritual Light and Life. All below are comprehended by them above, and lie in their bosom; but the lesser Circle can by no means contain the greater; a Soul got no further than the first Heavens, cannot hear, cannot receive the Discoveries and Enjoyments of one that is got into the Third Heavens. If a Truth be very Raised and Spiritual, it is not the First Beam of Christ himself can shew us that Truth, and if I by my glimmering Light go about to examine and judge things spoken in a clearer Day than Mine, I shall be subject to many Mistakes, and Dangers of rejecting the Truth, because I do not understand it. In my Father's House, saith Christ, are many Mansions, it is true  
of



of his House of Grace here below, as well as that of Glory above. Behave thy self then orderly in God's House, go not out of thy place to quarrel with thy Fellow-Servant. The Talent is given to every one to work with, and not to sit idle and trouble others; thou hast enough to do with thy self; why can'st thou not let thy Brother alone? He doth not disturb thee in thy Enjoyment: Pray be so civil as to let him quietly possess his own. Thou hast never the less because he hath some, because he hath more. God hath given to both as pleaseth him; and what he hath, and what thou hast too, if you were in the true Union of one Spirit, it belongs to you both.

Let every Christian then say of his present State and Measure, this is my present Heaven, my present Mansion, here my God doth lead me, here he dispenseth himself to me, and here I will wait till I am called up higher; and if another comes and speaks things beyond my present Understanding and Experience, I will judge no Man's Light, Life and Liberty in the Lord: Being constant to this, that as Christ in the Flesh came to his own, and his own received him not, so also may Christ in the *Spirit*. Let us then instead of judging and censuring what we do not yet understand,

be faithful to what we already know, let us answer our present Light with a suitable Life; so shall we grow up, not only into all the Discoveries of Truth, which are any where to be found among our Brethren; but into Him also in all things who is our Elder Brother, and our Head. Have we received any one Ray, any one Gleam of Spiritual Light into our Souls? Let us watch it, let us cherish it, let us walk according to the Direction and Instinct of it, and this Beam shall quickly, swiftly grow up into a glorious Day in our Spirits; *For the Path of the Righteous Man is as the shining Light, that shines more and more to the perfect Day.*

And as we cannot comprehend the several Ages and Growths of good Minds, so neither do we know all the Imperfections that belong to a good Man, we cannot lay out the *Minimum quod sit* of Grace, viz. If there be not so much there is no Admission into Heaven; nor the *Maximum quod sit* of Sin, that it is so great, so high, it is unpardonable. And therefore we need be very wary, least we condemn our selves in another Man's Person and Circumstance as *David* did, 2 *Sam.* 12. 5. when the Prophet *Nathan* represented to him his own Sin in a Parable. Since then thou dost not know how far thou thyself

self may'ft Fall by Temptation, it doth not become thee to be fevere in thy poor Brother's Cafe. No Christian provides lefs for his own ftanding, than he that is feverly Spirited toward his fallen Brother. And I doubt not but many a one hath been left to Fall *signanter*, *signally*, upon this Account. While we are then in Danger our felves, let us not be too forward to censure others; let us be fo far Gainers by our Temptations and Mifcarriages, to learn thereby more Charity and Compaffion to our fallen Brother; let our own fad Experience byafs us to a Tendernefs towards them. Sure I am, it is a becoming Frame of Heart for us to fear always with refpect to our felves, but never to triumph over our Brother. Did we fee the Root of Darknefs, Error, and Sin that is in our felves, we fhould have little Leafure, and lefs Difpofition to aggravate the Appearance or the reality of it in our Brother. Yea, the more humble, holy and Spiritual we are, the more meek and tender fhould we approve our felves to be in this Cafe; remembering ftill the Apoftles Rule, *Gal. 6. 1. Brethren, if any Man be overtaken with a Fault, ye which are Spiritual reftore fuch a one in the Spirit of Meeknefs; confidering thy felf left thou alfo be tempted.*



## Quest. V.

My *Fifth* Question shall be taken from the *different Make and Complexion* of Minds, and it shall be this.

*May there not be as great a Difference in the Make (give me leave to use the Word) of my Brother's Apprehension and mine, as there is in the Matter between us? And if so, why do I then foolishly account it his Fault, because God did not make him more like me? To be offended one with another because we differ, is to be offended with him who made our Souls, and our Apprehensions, the immediate Issue of our Souls. It is to be offended because our Apprehensions were not formed in the same Mould. We do not quarrel with one another, because we are not like one another in the Face, in the Figure, and Shape of our Bodies; why then should we be angry with one another, because our Minds are not alike? Whatsoever some have said that all Souls are equal, yet Experience tells us, that there is as great a Variety of Souls, as of other things: In some of which it may rise from their setting out, in others from Education. Why then should we be angry with one another, because our Minds and Sentiments are not alike? If it were come to that Pass in our present imperfect*

fect State, for my own part, I should be weary of the World; because all Minds would then be an Unison, and no Harmony, which would be a very dull Business; till we come to that perfect and universal Harmony which contains all Variety and Unity in it self.

And we may here observe too, that Men differ more in *Words*, than they do in *Thoughts*; and in the *Notions* and *Explications* of Things, more than they do in the *Things* themselves. A great part of our Differences is in Words. Look abroad among those Persons, those good People that seem most of all to differ from thee, and thou may'st see a great deal of Divine Truth in their *Hearts* and *Lives*, which thou canst not find in their *Heads*.

I am perswaded if we had Skill and Condescension enough to descend into some Christians Hearts, we should find them very knowing and excellent, however, we and they may differ in our *Explication* of things.

We have Wrong Ways of judging one another. We measure all things by an *outward Appearance*; by an outward Conformity to something we have set up, and not by an *Inward Principle* and Power. It is an excellent Scripture, that in *Prov. 16. 2.* *All the ways of a Man are clean in his own Eyes, but the Lord weigheth the Spirits.* We weigh Words and Phrases,

Phrases, Notions and Opinions, and the *Outward Show* of Things ; but we know not how to *weigh* one anothers *Spirits*.

I have somewhere met with a Story of a blind Man, who could distinguish and judge of all Metals and Precious Stones by weighing of them in his Hand. I am persuaded if we had thus learned to judge of Spiritual Things and Persons, not by the Beauty of some outward Form and Appearance, or an Agreeableness to our own Notions and Opinions ; but by the *Weight* of an Inward Principle, and the Power of a Divine Life ; we should discover a most harmonious Agreement in the Radical and Essential Principles of Divine Truth and Goodness, among those who most of all seem to oppose one another in their Notions and Opinions. If we did but know how to get into, to open and interpret one another *Souls* ; how to weigh not only Words and Phrases but *Spirits* ; we should quickly find what hath been said ; that we differ more in Words than in Thoughts, and more in our Notions of things than in things themselves.

Sir *Kenselm Digby*, in his Treatise of Bodies, tells us of a Blind Man, that was so blind he could not discern any Light of a Candle, or the Sun : But yet he still knew when any Light was let into the Room, by the Cheerfulness of his *Spirits* ;  
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tho the Light did not affect his *Eye*, yet it reach'd his *Spirits*. Consider, Reader, what Principle and Point of Christianity, (how clearly and expressely soever it hath been revealed to us in the Letter of the Scripture) hath been universally received, and explained alike by all good Men? Do we not every where see those very Persons, who as we have Reason to judge, have entertained the same Divine Truths in the Inward Power, Life, and Spirit of them, do yet discourse, interpret and preach them in Notions, Opinions and Forms very different one from another? Do we not every where see good Men puzzling and confounding one another with their own Explanations of those very things, in the Life and Power of which they are already agreed? Have we not upon this Account, seen some of the best of Men such Strangers to, and so jealous of one another, that they have not been able to bear even the Presence of one another? Do we not every where see Souls vitally quickened and informed; their Conversations beautified and adorned with the same Spiritual Truths; which yet by their Explications of them, they may seem to thee and me not to understand, yea to contradict.

Well

Well might the Apostle say, 1 Cor. 4. 3. *With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of Mans Judgment; yea, I judge not myself; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* God only judgeth aright, he sees through all those Temptations which are still assaulting, and too often foiling us; and through that Veil of Flesh, which is still making us walk unevenly. And he searcheth the Heart whether it be obedient, upright, and true to him. And he goes yet deeper into the secret Spirit of our Minds, and into the Principle it self. And yet further and lower than all this, than our Spirits which at best may be weak and mixt; and at last judges according to the Seed of Election, the Seed of Christ, and his Righteousness upon us and in us. And let me ask thee, thou that art quarreling with thy Brother for differing from thee, in some lesser Matters; when God comes to look through all thy Veils of Duties, Ordinances and Profession; and to try thy Heart, with what Spirit of Love, Obedience and Truth thou hast been in thy Work; what is the Judgment thou wouldst then stand to? Is it not that God would judge thee after all, according to his own Grace, according to the Name and Nature of Christ written upon thee, and in thee by his Eternal Election, according to the Book of Life?

And

And why then wilt not thou have thy Brother also thus judged?

How do we in a Mist of Confusion stumble at and fall foul upon one another, for want of this Skill, Love and Comprehension? for want of this right way of judging one another; not by an outward Appearance, an outward Conformity to something we set up; but an Inward Principle and Power? We know nothing unless we meet with it in our own Mode and Dress. We judge the outside, but cannot search the Heart, and much less can we judge Principles, for they lie deeper than the Heart, and are Christ himself and his Spirit quickening and moving all his People in Ways we understand not. Who, though our Heart and our Flesh fail, and our Faith also many times, yet he abides the Root of all. Blessed be God, there is a Life of his, hidden in the Heart of all his Children, which is safe not only from the Fury of Men and Devils; but from all the Judgings and Censurings of our Brethren: *A Life hid with Christ in God.*

To conclude this Question then, may there not be a great Difference in the Make of my Brother's Apprehensions and mine; and may not our other Differences, from this reason, lie more in Words than in Things?

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Consider how the *Angels* do not fail in the Service God hath appointed them to do for us, because we cannot express our selves congruously to them. Yea, God himself doth not deny our poor, broken and shatter'd Services, because our Apprehensions are infinitely short of him. How much less then ought this Disparity of Thoughts, to make any Difference between those that are sincere and honest hearted, and right and agreed in the main Designs of Religion? My Brother cannot be so unlike to me, as I am unlike to God.

And in the pursuit of this Question, I might further say before I shut it up, We do not wholly slight, and throw away those things which come out of the Hand of *Nature* with some Weaknesses, and Imperfections; but we make use of *Art* to help, polish, and perfect *Nature*, where she is imperfect. Why should it not be so in Grace? Why should not I by my Skill, if God hath given me any, rather endeavour to improve and polish my Brother, and lessen the Differences in his Apprehension and mine; and by Discourse, and a mutual Understanding, try better to suit and proportion his Thoughts and my own; why should not I do this rather, than build upon the Shortness and Imperfections of *Nature* or *Grace*, in my self;

self ; or others, to make a Foundation of Division ?

Yea, before I leave this Question I would also say ; may there not be a great Difference in the Constitution and Complexion of our *Bodies* ; and may not from hence much of our Differences in this matter arise ; and much more of the Warmth of them. Thou art no more to wonder that others are not of thy Mind, than that all have not the same Constitution of Body. I would not be mistaken, I am not confounding Religion, and the Temperament of the Body ; nor subjecting that which is the top Perfection of our Souls to a Corporeal Impression ; yet I say the Body doth get in, as well as our Reason, where it should not ; and hath some kind of Influence at least into the manner of our Conceptions and Apprehensions, whilst we are in this United State ; and much more into the angry Management of them. And if we examine this Business strictly, we shall find that many Miscarriages among Brethren, are ascribed to the Influences of God's Spirit, which are the Effects of our *Constitution*, and a great deal of that which we call Zeal for God, will, I doubt be found to be but our own Humour, Passion and Choler. Sure I am, there are *Bodily Infirmities* to be considered and allowed for,  
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in many of the Differences and Contentions among good Persons.

*Quest. VI.*

My *Sixth* Question shall be taken from the vast Inequality between the things wherein we *differ* from one another, and those wherein we are *agreed*; and it shall be this.

Tell me who can, *Why should a plain, an express, an undoubted, undeniable, everlasting, and eternal Truth, Duty, Beauty and Perfection be suspended, because of Difference in Matters dark, doubtful, uncertain, and at best circumstantial, temporary, and perishing?*

It is true, we are to reject no Truth of God. For every Truth is a Ray and Beam of God himself; and God is no where little, no where to be neglected. We refuse not the King's Coin, although it be never so little a Piece; his Stamp gives it some intrinsecal and more Current Value. Nor is the Simile improper to our present Case; for we cannot wave the least Truth; but we refuse our *Profit* as well as our *Duty*. For every Truth turns to some *Account* or other; and is at least an Ornament, if not Food to the Mind. But if every Truth is to be admitted, then certainly the plainest, the clearest, the greatest, and the weightiest Truth



Truth ought to take Place and be preferred.

Now the things wherein we differ are most of them obscure, intricate, and such things as have sufficient means of Union and Determination. Matters of doubtful Disputation: Such things in which it is much better for a Man to have Knowledge, than Opinion. For in Knowledge a Man hath the good of both sides, without running the Hazard of either.

In *Knowledge* a Man may know both ways, without any harm. But thou canst not be in an Opinion, without running some Hazard. In Knowledge thou hast all the good and advantage of an Opinion, but Opinion hath some Hazard attending it.

In Matters of Uncertainty, it is safer to be an Ingenuous Pursuer after Truth, with Indifferency of Judgment and Affection, than to be in an Opinion before due Enquiry and full Satisfaction. If a thing cannot be determined, it is better in that case, to think our selves no body, than by Affecting it, to be thought some body. For on the one side thou wilt not be in an Indisposition to receive Truth when God shall make it appear; but on the other side, thou may'st, e'er thou art aware, be *Superstitious*: As charging  

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thy self where God hath not charged thee; or laying more Strefs on a thing than it will bear, which is the true Notion of *Superstition*.

The Matters wherein we differ, are many of them things of which a Man may, with Innocency and Safety be ignorant. Either they are not at all revealed, or not so clearly, but wise and honest Men may be of different Opinions about them.

Or else they are Matters of meer *Speculation*, curious, and dark, and such things as God hath left in the Clouds.

Or they are many of them things unnecessary and unprofitable, and which may be spar'd without any danger to true Religion: Yea, such things as may very fitly be called the *Suckers* of Religion, dry, dejune, husky Notions, Opinions and Fancies, and barren Forms; which are so far from Feeding, that they Eat up the Heart and Life of all *real* Religion. Foolish and unlearned Questions, as the Apostle calls them; comparatively but Trifles; such things as, in a great measure, we at this day owe our present Leanness of Soul unto.

Or they are things of less Moment and Consequence, the *Externals* and Circumstantials, not the Essentials of Religion. Things not of the Foundation  
but

but extrinfecal to faving Faith and a Holy Life :

Or they are things, many of them, of a Nature perfectly *Indifferent*, neither good nor evil; but according to the Spirit and Intention which acteth them. And when they are Imposed, they are unjustly made Necessary to Communion.

Or they are things in which the Affirmative and the Negative, may be *both* innocent. Things which may *in utramque partem*, on either Part, be believed or disputed.

Or they are matters of *humane Interest* and Worldly Designs. Things in which not God, but our selves, yea, the worst part of our selves, are concerned.

Or perhaps when all comes to all, they are *Fancies*, Notions, and Opinions; and have no Existence any where but in our own Imaginations, and cease to be, as often as the Sticklers for them drop asleep, or give over thinking.

Or they are Matters of *Inference*, which is not always regular and honest. Or at best they are not things necessary to our present or future Happiness. For to some of these Heads, most of the Disputes that divide us, may be reduced.



Yea, lastly, The Opinions and Forms of Religion which divide us, are Changeable, Temporary, Transient, and *Perishing* Things.

For Opinion, I think it no Affront to any Man's Opinion, to tell him, how fond soever he is of it now, that it *must die*. For all the truest and best Notions we can have of Spiritual Truths and Things here below, are to be *done away*, when we arrive at that State above. So the Apostle expressly tells us, 1 Cor. 13. 9. 10. where having said we know but in part, and prophesy but in part; he adds when that which is *perfect* is come, then that which is *in part* shall be *abolished*: We shall then lose all our present best Notions and Opinions of Spiritual things, not in a Blackness of Darkness and Death, violently breaking in upon, and overspreading them; but in a Brightness of unmixt and Eternal Light, arising upon them, and comprehending them in it self. They shall all then be blotted out; not as Water quenches Fire; but after such a manner as the Beams of the Sun do put it out by drawing up the finer and fiery parts into themselves; they shall then be put out, not as a Candle is by the Extinguisher, but as the Darkneses and Shadows of the Night, are swallowed up by

by the Light of the Morning; or rather as the several Colours of Light in the first dawning of the Day, are afterwards drunk up in the pure and perfect Light of an encreasing Day. It is as yet but a Morning Light with the most enlightened Souls here on Earth.

In the first breaking of the Day, the Light, you know, appears to us in Variety of Colours one after another, till at last as the day comes on, all these Colours are changed into an unstain'd and pure Light; such are the Discoveries of Spiritual things to our Understanding: While our true Day is yet but springing, all our Notions and Opinions of them, are as so many colours of Light, growing clearer and clearer unto a Noon-day brightness. Now all these colours vanish, now all our mistaken, dark, mix'd, short disproportioned Notions and Opinions break up into a Light which hath nothing of privation, mixture, impfection, or shadow in it: But till then it is impossible for us to have such Notions and Opinions of Spiritual Truths and Things as can admit of no change or improvement. We are here in a growing travelling State; and while are so, *Motion* is better than *Rest*. We can now no more stint or fix our Sense of Things than we can hinder and stop our own

growth, or keep Day out of the World when the Sun riseth, or hinder its progress to a Noon-day Glory, when it is up. It is here not our Reproach, but our Praise to be still *changing* our Minds, to be still transformed from Glory to Glory in the renewing of them, that we may prove what the good and acceptable and perfect Will of God is. To change for Improvement, to alter our Minds for the better, is not our *Inconstancy*, but our *Vertue*. This is only to change, as all things do when they increase. Nothing speaks us more rooted, fixed and established, than such a Change or rather Growth. Thou art not it may be, of the same Mind this instant, thou wert in a few days past, neither dost thou know what Mind thou shalt have to morrow. The Spirit of Man changes Opinion every Moment, and what one measure of reason hath brought in this Hour, a stronger may carry out the next; nor will the good Spirit, if thou art acted by it, suffer thee to rest in thy *present Light*; and much less to Rest in thy *remaining Darknes*. Thou art not yet so knowing, so good, as thou shouldst be; if thou canst be satisfied with thy self; and thy present Notions of things. Art not thou waiting for Christ to touch thine Eyes a *second* time? Dost thou not pray



pray for his Spirit to lead thee into *all* Truths? Canst thou be content to lose thy Share in the *Riches* of that Glory thou art *yet* a Stranger to? And if thou thinkest that thou understandest all *Mysteries*, and hast all Knowledge, yet sure I am, all that thou canst attain to here below, is but a *little* part of what is yet to come, and will be done away when that which is Perfect appears. Why then dost thou lay so great a Stress upon those Opinions which thou hadst not the other day, which thou mayst lose to morrow, and which are finally to be swallowed up? and why art thou so fond of them to the prejudice of that Love and Charity, without which thou art with all thy Knowledge *nothing*.

And then, as for the outward *Forms* of Religion how significant soever they are, as Jesus Christ brings forth himself in them, and through them; yet I might shew you they are in themselves *Worldly Rudiments*, and perish in the using of them. They are part of that Scheme that passeth away, of that Frame of things which is to be dissolved, when God comes to shake, not the Earth only, but the *Heavens* also; and to bring forth the things that *cannot be shaken*, as the Apostle speaks *Heb. 12. 26*. The outward Forms of Religion, are at most, but the Scaffold

to the Divine Love, from God to us, and from us to God, to all the Children of God; yea to all our Fellow-Creatures; and so are to wait upon that, and not the Building upon it.

But now on the other Hand, Love is a plain, clear, exprefs, lasting Eternal Duty and Perfection.

I. *Love* is a *plain, exprefs* Duty, a plain, exprefs, undoubted, undeniable Duty and Perfection. There is no Duty more exprefsly and absolutely laid down, more strongly founded in Scripture, than this of *Brotherly Love*. Let us turn here to two or three Scriptures to this purpose.

My first is *Heb. 13. 1.* where it is absolutely said, without any Distinction, Limitation or Reserve. *Let Brotherly Love continue.* This is a Rule without any Exception. No Case whatsoever must contradict it. We must look upon it as a thing indispensable. There is not a greater Assurance of any Truth, than we have for this in our Bibles; and yet no Truth hangs looser about Christians in their Practice and in their Judgment too, than this. What a Shame is it to see Christians so jealous, earnest and pressing in doubtful and uncertain things, but so remiss in

in a matter so plain, clear and sure as this.

My second Scripture is that *Mark* 12. 30. where our Saviour being asked by one of the Scribes, which was the first Commandment of all; our Lord answers him, the first of all the Commandments is, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength. This is the first Commandment: And the second is like; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self; there is none other Commandment greater than this.* Our Lord makes these the first and greatest Commandments; the Sum of all Religion, to love God with our whole selves; and our Neighbour as our selves.

If you ask me, who is this Neighbour we are to love as our selves? you have an Answer in *Luke* 10. where our Saviour being asked this very Question, offers an excellent Parable, and therein gives a full Answer to it; and the Answer hath the greater Force in it to our present purpose, because we find it connected by our Saviour himself with this very Commandment to love our Neighbour as our selves.



*A certain Man, saith he, at Verse 20. went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and fell among Thieves, which stript him of his Raiment, and wounded him, and departed leaving him half Dead: And by chance there came by a certain Priest that way, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side: And likewise a Levite, which when he was at the Place, and looked on him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he had Compassion on him. And went to him and bound up his Wounds, pouring in Oyl and Wine, and set him on his own Beast, and brought him to an Inn and took Care of him, &c. Which now of these saith Christ to the Lawyer, think-est thou, was Neighbour to him that fell among Theives? And he said, he that shewed Mercy on him. Then said Jesus Go and do likewise. Besides the excellent Spiritual Sense, which is given us of this Scripture, shewing the Insufficiency of the Law to recover fallen Man, our Saviour here tells us, that Neighbourhood is as large as Mankind, as Human Nature it self. That every Spirit, Person and Creature, that lives, moves and hath Being in God, within the encompassing, upon the Ground and Root of the Divine Being, is our Neighbour, our Brother, another Self, as our Self*

Self to our Selves : The Object of our Care and Love ; of an Heavenly and Incorruptible Love. That we are not to confine and restrain that Love within the narrow Bounds of our own Country and Town ; nor within the narrower Compass and Pale of our own Church, Profession and Perswasion ; which ought to be Universal. That our Love to *All*, is not as we are apt to think, our Charity only, but our Duty : Not only an Expression of our *Kindness*, but our *Justice* : Not the *making*, but the *paying* of an Obligation. That the true Divine Love is as extensive as the World it self, and holds the World in its Arms, comprehending all things with the strictest and tenderest Embraces in it self ; as one self with it self : Which is the genuine Sense of that Expression the Apostles gives concerning this Love, 1 Cor. 13. 7. where he saith of it, that it *beareth* or *sustaineth* all things, *viz.* It contains and comprehends all things. For tho we read the Word love *bears* all things, yet that is a remote Sense of the Greek Word, as some have observed ; and besides it makes the last part of the Verse a Tautology, a vain Repetition, where we are again told it *suffers all things*.

All this is plainly the Literal Sense of this Parable ; and teacheth us that our  
Love

Love ought to be as comprehensive as the whole World ; that all Being is the Object of our Love, as well as of our Understanding. That Neighbourhood is not to be limited, and determined by the Vicinity of our Habitations, nor by our Relation to one another, as Church-Members ; but by the Tie of Humanity. For the poor *Samaritan* here proves a generous, affectionate Neighbour, Brother and Friend to a *Jew*, when he lay wounded dying, and neglected by those who were nearest to him, and most esteemed by him : When both the Priest and *Levite*, who were of the same Nation, of the same Form of Religion, and Teachers in it, passed by him, as he lay Robb'd, Wounded, and Dying, and took no Notice, no Care of him ; then the *Samaritan* pours Wine and Oyl into his Wounds, with tender Care, at his own Expence, brings him back to Life and Joy : So that in our Lord's Sence, a Stranger, both to Country and Religion, may be our Neighbour, our Brother, our Friend ; when he that lives next Door to us by Habitation, and is nearest to us in an outward Form and Mode of Religion, may not be so.

This seems to me to be the Literal Sence of this Parable, and if it do not so to others, it is because they are not so



so quick-sighted and ingenuous as the Lawyer here was ; who when our Saviour, at the close of the Parable, ask'd him who was the poor Man's Neighbour, he readily answered, *He that shew-ed Mercy on him, Verse 37.* In short, the Literal Scope of this Parable is to instruct us, that our Neighbour is all Mankind, and that I am to love my Neighbour, that is, every other Person as my self, with that Divine Love, in whose Flame I sacrifice my self and all things to God, to receive my self again, and all things, together with my self, in a more excellent and durable Form.

Thou art first to love God with thy *whole* self. And then to love thy Neighbour *as* thy self. Be thou thy self in thy *whole* Person a Sacrifice of a whole Burnt-Offering, ascending in a Sacred Flame of Heavenly Love up to God, the Universal and Eternal Beauty. As the Zeal of the House of God, which Zeal, as one speaks, *as Love flaming*, did eat up David and Christ, so let this Heavenly Love of the Divine Beauty (which is the Beauty it self descending in a pure and sweet Flame upon thee) by *consuming* thee, convert thee into one Spiritual Flame with it self. Now Love thou no where but where thou Livest ; in thy Beloved. Let thy Beloved alone now Live in thee. When  
thou

thou hast thus lost thy self, by an Heavenly Love in thy Beloved in thy God : When thou hast by the sacred and sweet Mystery of this Love, found thy Beloved, thy God in the place of thy self ; then love thy Neighbour as thy self. Love thy God in thy Neighbour. Let this Neighbourhood of Divine Love be large as the God of Love himself is. Let every thing that lives, and moves, and hath its being in God, be *another Self* to thee : Be that Neighbour thou art to love as thy self. O sweet and Blessed Neighbourhood, in which thy God, thy self, thy Neighbour, all things dwell all together in one Divine Loveliness and Love, by dwelling all together in God ! But whither do I run ? Thither, whither, if I were able, I would carry all the World with me. Into that *Fountain of Love*, from whence alone we can be enabled to understand, and to practice this *Universal Love*.

That which I would urge from all this, is this ; that our Lord who best knew how to state matters, makes this the Sum of all Religion, to love God with our whole selves, and to love our Neighbour as our selves. It is plain from this Scripture that in our Lords Opinion, Love is no Circumstance of Religion, but Religion *self*. He calls  
Love

Love the fulfilling of the *Law*: And I may add of the *Gospel* too. It is all the Duties, Graces and Beauties both of the *Law* and of the *Gospel* too in one.

It is again plain from Scripture, that if Neighbourhood reach so far, it much more takes in all our Brethren, *Rom. 13. 8.* as *Paul* interprets this Neighbour to be every other Person. *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.* Surely then it cannot leave out any Brother. How exceeding short are we now of answering this Command of Christ, which requires us to look upon *all Men* as our Neighbours, and to love them as our very selves, while we cannot love our Christian Brother? Shall we at once break all the Commands of God, to gratify any particular Opinion or Humour, to the prejudice of this Love?

Another Scripture is that in *John 13. 34.* *A new Commandment I give unto you, saith Christ to his Disciples, that you love one another as I have loved you, - that you also love one another; By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another.*

This is the great Command of Christ, that we love one another. This is the Proof we are to make to all Men, that we are the Disciples of Christ. A *new Commandment*, not so as if it were never



ver before. For you have it, *Levit. 19. 18.* Thou shalt not bear any Grudge against the Children of thy People; but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. I am the Lord. It is then an old and new Commandment, as St John tells us, *1 John 2. 7, 8, 9, 10.* Brethren I write no new Commandment to you. He that saith he is in the Light, and hateth his Brother, is in Darknes even until now. He that loveth his Brother abideth in the Light, &c.

It is then a new Commmandment:

I. For the Excellency of it. So new is taken in Scripture.

II. It is a new Commandment, as all Evangelical things are new, *viz. more Spiritual.* Not in the Types and Figures.

III. It is new because propounded on a new Ground. God's Goodness in sending his Son, and Christ's Good-will in coming on the great Errand and Embassy of Love from his Father. New, because it is expounded in the Gospel in a new manner, prest more plainly, and with new Arguments, and urged by a new Example of our Lord and Master.

IV. It

IV. It is *new*, as taking in a new degree of Love; even to the laying down of our Lives for one another. *John 15. 12. This is my Commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater Love hath no Man, than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend. And 1 Joh. 3. 16. hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.* As the Case may be, a Christian would gladly sacrifice his Life for the Church of God: As we know the Apostles were ready to do, and so have many since.

V. *New* because a new Foundation is laid, which is the Union of all Christians, as Members of one and the same Body, which hath Christ for its Head, and which Body is Christ: Called *Christ mystical* 1 Cor. 12. 12.

VI. *New* because this is Christ's peculiar and proper Badge and Character. *John 13. 35. by this shall Men know you are my Disciples, if ye love one another. 1 Joh. 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment. This is the distinguishing Character of the Disciples of Christ. They*  
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do in vain pretend to love him, that want Bowels of Love to all his Members, who rend and tear those for whom he died. Who lives in those we do not vouchsafe to love. It was a common Observation in former Times, *how do these Christians love one another*, so that they are ready to die for one another? Their Love arose so high, as it was said of them, they had all things common but their Wives; they had one common stock, to the Intent and Purpose of a joint Supply. What, as one speaks, would those Christians say, if they saw our Times.

VII. *New* because it commands a Love that is *not common* among Men: Not a Love of Consanguinity, nor a Love of Gratitude, nor a Love of Interest, and the like; but of the special Love of Christians among themselves *as such*. Called *1 Thes. 4. 9. Brotherly Love*, and which is said to extend to all.

*Lastly, New* because the *last* Command of Christ, and the most lasting one, as we call the last Days, *Tempora novissima*, the *newest* Days; and Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell, *quatuor novissima*, the Four Last or *Newest* Things.

This



This was our Saviour's dying Charge, as you may see *John 13. 1.* When *Jesus* knew that his Hour was come, and that he should depart out of this World unto the Father, then it was he gave this Commandment, this new Commandment, that we should love one another as he hath loved us.

This was our Saviour's parting and dying Command, and is given forth to us, just before he went to die for us. The Dying Words of a Friend have more than an ordinary weight with us. Shall not the Dying Words of a Saviour have much more so, and when he was about to die for us?

Again, Love is a *lasting* and *eternal* Duty, Beauty and Perfection, *1 Cor. 13. 8.* The Apostle tells us, that *Charity never faileth*, but whether there be *Prophecies* they shall fail: Whether there be *Tongues* they shall cease: Whether there be *Knowledge* it shall vanish away: And in the last Verse of that Chapter he concludes, *now abideth Faith hope and Charity*, These three; *but the greatest of these is Charity.*

That Love, that Charity, which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not it self, which is not puffed up, which doth not behave it self unseemly, which seeketh not her

own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no Evil; that Charity which rejoices not in Iniquity but in the Truth; that Charity which bears all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things, this Charity never faileth; all other things shall cease: But we take Love along with us to Heaven. We might indeed as well stay here Below, as go up into that State Above without Love: For it is the Heavenly Eye and Ear, and Taste and Feeling of the Soul. It is that *Divine Sense* of the Soul by which it takes in the Blessedness of Heaven. It is the Heavenly Principle, Faculty and Power, by which we are to converse with all the Glories of the World above. It is that which enables us to a happy Eternity. As *Sense* is suited and proportioned to sensible things, and *Reason* to Rational; so *Love* is, as I may say, the Proportion of the Soul to God, and to all Divine things. It is the Capacity we carry with us to Heaven, to tast and relish all the Joys and Glories of that State.

Love is that which constitutes Heaven, which makes Heaven. It is the Form, the Matter, and all of Heaven. It is not the Heavenly Faculty; but the Heavenly Act and Enjoyment too. It is the highest Perfection and Pleasure of the Soul.

Soul. It is the Glorified Act of the Soul, the Vital Act of the Soul in Glory. The Soul is now *all Love*. This is the Perfection, the end of all other Acts; they are all subordinate and subservient. When Love is perfected, all the Dispensations of God to us, are accomplished, and we are compleatly saved. Tell me now, why should an obscure, dark, intricate, curious, unnecessary, uncertain, fading Notion and Opinion, be applied to the Prejudice of that Charity, which shall never fail. All our Notions and Opinions, as hath been said, are changeable, temporary, transient and perishing things; they pass away and confute themselves, while we are contending for them: But Love is a perpetual, lasting, perfect, and an Eternal Duty, Beauty and Perfection. This shall remain when all our Notions and Opinions, of one sort or other, shall for ever cease to be: Shall either, if they be false, sink down into their first Nothingness, out of which they sprung; or if they be right, rise up into, and wholly lose themselves in their Original Light.



## Quest. VII.

My *Seventh* Question shall be taken from the Regard which is to be had to every the *least degree* of Goodness, and it shall be this.

*Wilt thou not take Pleasure in him that is better than he was, and a good Man, altho he is not so knowing as thy self, and come up to thee?* The first Disposition of the Soul to God, is of God, and he will perfect his own Work. Thy Brother hath begun to set out well, and hath followed thee in many things, altho, it may be, thou hast gotten the Start of him. Have a little Patience, and he may Overtake thee: Yea, he will quickly leave thee behind, if thou spend thy Time in unprofitable Questions and Wranglings. For it is in several Senses true, *the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.*

It is a sad Miscarriage in us to discountenance and discourage a Comer on. If a Man's Face be set towards God, guide him in the way, if thou canst; but however do not give him an Occasion of Stumbling in it. This is to be like Christ; *not to break the Bruised Reed, nor to quench the Smoaking Flax, who gathers the Lambs in his Arms, and carries them*

*them in his Bosom, and leads those that are with young.*

Thy Brother is not come up to thy Light: But he hath begun well, and is coming on as fast as God giveth the Increase. It is with the Soul in the pursuit after Truth, as it was with the Prophet in the Vision of the holy Waters, *Ezek. 47. 3, 4, 5.* at the first measuring they were up to the Ankles, then to the Knees, then to the Loins, and at last they were a great River that he could not pass over, Waters to swim in, and a River that could not be passed over. God in the Discoveries of himself goes our Pace; so that one thing may not overthrow, but build up, and perfect another. How dark art thou to the Light of others above thee? and how unacquainted with their Life? We are called *Children of the Day*. A double Metaphor to make out the several Growths and Measures of Light. Thy Brother is a Child of the Day, it is *Break of Day* with his Soul: And God is enlightening him Beam by Beam, as *Luther* speaks of himself. The Light is shining brighter and brighter in him to perfect Day. He is a Lover of God; and as it is said, *Judges 5. 31.* *He shall be as the Sun when he goeth forth in his Might.*

Thy Brother is not as thou would have him; but he is a good Man. There is something in him thou dost not like; but is there nothing thou dost? There is something thou thinkest Evil, but is nothing Good? He is in some few things perhaps mistaken; but thou canst not say but he is right in others. Must the Good be thrown away with the Bad? What then will become of thee, if God should use thee thus? Why should not every one of us give to each other, the same Measure and Allowance which God afford to all? He considers our Make, and remembers that we are but Dust; that we are poor Fallible, shadowy Creatures, made up of Darknes as well as Light, of Not Being as well as Being, liable to Temptations; consisting of Flesh, as well as Spirit; and so exposed to contrary Appetites. And altho we are not all of a Piece, yet he doth not reject us. With what Tenderneſs doth our Saviour excuse his Disciples for sleeping, at a time one would have thought it were impossible for them not to be awake? *The Spirit saith he is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* If there be any good thing in us That he takes notice of, and cherisheth it; he doth not, as was said before, break the Bruised Reed, nor quench the Smoaking Flax, till he bring forth Judgment



ment unto Victory ; he gathers up the Fragments, and taketh Care that nothing be lost. Oh ! how little of this Spirit is to be found among us ? Thou canst not but own a Change in thy Brother ; although he is not yet as thou wouldst have him. He professeth Faith in Jesus Christ, and Repentance from Dead Works, he believes in Christ, and departs from Evil, altho he cannot understand, and close with many of thy Notions, nor submit to thy Form. He is better than he was, altho not, it may be so good as he should be. Nor, sure I am, art thou thy self. Is not Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, every where mingled, and scattered together in thy self, as well as in thy Brother ? Thou spyest Faults in him, canst thou see none in thy self ? He hath his Mistakes, art thou without them ? Let us then acknowledge the Evil that is in our selves, and own the Good that is in our Brother. Let us bemoan our *own Darkness*, and rejoice in our *Brother's Light*. This is the right Spirit of the Gospel ; but alas how far are we from it. We are hiding, covering, excusing, denying, or which is worse, it may be, defending the *Evil* that is in our selves, and in our own Parties ; and owning, challenging and magnifying the *Good*. But we shut  
our

our Eyes to all the Good that is in our differing Brother. And we are aggravating the Evil there. We think our own Darknes to be *Light*, because it hath some Glimmerings of Light with it: And we call our Brother's Light *Darkness*, because Darknes is mingled with it: But if we consult the Spirit of the Gospel, it will teach us to think the *worst* of our selves, and the *best* of others, not to sling Stones at others; but to trample upon our selves; to call our selves the *chiefest* of Sinners, and the *least* of Saints; to be *modest* concerning the Good, but *severe* against the Evil in our selves; to cover the Evil and to single out the good that is our Brother. Not to *rake up* the Infirmities and Weaknesses of others, but to *cover* a Multitude of Faults.

It is a good Principle *in odiosis quod minimum est sequimur, in favorabilibus quod est maximum.* In things that are Odious we should take notice of the least part of them; in things that are Favourable we should rise up to the highest degree. We should say any thing, or make any Excuse that is in any degree reasonable, to spare, rather than make hast to condemn our Brother for the Evil that is in him. And we should be always most ready to own and encourage the

the Good we may find there if we look for it, without Prejudice.

The Laws of Justice and Charity, bind us with greater Zeal, to *spare* and preserve an Innocent, than to *condemn* a guilty Person. Yea, there is much less Evil and Harm in sparing the Guilty, than in condemning the Good; because it is in the Power of Men to remit a Guilty Person to the Divine Judicature, and for *divers* Causes not to exert the *summum Jus*, not to use Severity; but in *no* Case is it lawful to condemn the Innocent. Sure I am, it is better to own the Good that is in my Brother, notwithstanding the Mixture of Evil, than because of the Evil to cast off the Good. *Wilt thou also destroy the Righteous with the Wicked*, saith *Abraham* to God in the case of *Sodom*? And he argues with God, and brings him down to this at last, That if there were Ten Righteous Persons found in the City, God would not destroy them for their sakes. And no one knows how much farther *Abraham* might have prevailed with God; for *Abraham* gave out first. And yet at last the Righteous Persons are snatched out before Destruction should come upon the rest. So say I here, wilt thou cut down the Wheat with the Tares. I had rather take a great many Pretenders  
to



Religion in my Bosom, that should not come there, than shut out one of those Little ones, that ought to be taken in. It is better to be often mistaken, than once uncharitable. We should be very careful how we slight the least Appearance of God and Goodness any where, and in any State and Condition. We call it a Gold Mine, though we find but *few Grains* of Gold in great Heaps of Earth. The Denomination here follows not the *Greater*, but the *Nobler* part. Thou wilt not lose the smallest Grains of Gold though buried in great Quantities of Earth. Thou wilt not throw away the Gold because it lies in the rude gross Oar, or slight the Silver because of its Alloy. We are none of us yet melted down out of our gross Dross, nor refined from our base Alloy. Nor shall we till Death. O! where is the Skill, the Care, the Gentleness, the Love among us, that knows how to separate the Pure Metal every where, from the Dross, to *cherish* the one, and in Order to that *Cherishing* to *consume* the other.

Quest.

## Quest. VIII.

My *Eighth* Question shall be taken from our Difference and Disparity with *our Selves*.

*Why do I, who so little agree with my self, challenge others for differing from me? Thou differest from thy self extreamly in thy natural Temper. Sometimes thou art courteous, and greatly conversible, and complaisant, sometimes peevish and froward.*

Yea, a good Man may differ from himself not only in his Natural Temper, but in his very Principle. The Apostle complains *Rom. 7. 21. that when he would do Good, Evil was present with him.*

He differs again in his *best* Resolutions, Purposes, and Inclinations.

He differs again from himself in his Opinion and Judgment. If thou lookest back a little, how often mayst thou remember, thou hast chang'd thy own Mind? For the Spirit of Man changes Opinions every Moment. And that which one measure of reason brought in to day, another may carry out to morrow. How various are our Apprehensions from themselves? We are in *continuo Motu & Fluxu*, in perpetual Motion, in our *Minds*, as well as in our *Bodies*. No Man knows where  
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to have *himself*, any more than *another*; and others do not more differ from us, than we differ from our selves. No Man can tell what Thoughts he shall have of any thing *to morrow*; and ought not this to shame our *present* Confidence towards our differing Brethren? Thou wast, it may be, as Peremptory heretofore as thou canst be now, and yet thou hast seen reason to alter thy Mind. Thou darést not now say thou art come to a *ne plus ultra*; thou art not come to set up thy Pillars, beyond which there is no passing. We had quite lost the New found World, if Men had contented themselves with the Old. Thou darést not say that there is *nothing beyond thee*. Thou wouldst not be content to lose thy Share in those things thou art yet ignorant of. Thou prayest continually for farther measures of that Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, that unveiling Spirit, that thou mayst *know the Riches of the Glory of Christ's Inheritance in his Saints*. First, therefore take Pains with thy self, and since thou dost no more agree with thy self, be not angry that another differs from thee. Why should I expect others to hold more to my Sense and Imagination, than I do to my own. Thou canst no more *fix* thy own Sense of things, than thou canst hinder thy own Growth. Why then must thy  
thy



thy present measures be a Standard to others? Why art thou angry others do not *come up* to thee; When thou dost not know how long thou shalt *stay* where thou art? For Motion, as I have often said, is better than Rest, until we are got quite home. Thou art not satisfied with thy self, and thy present Notions of things, if thou art really a good Man; but art waiting for Christ to give thine Eyes another Touch. Be not then angry with thy Brother about Notions and Opinions thou hadst not the other Day, and mayst be ashamed of to morrow.

### Quest. IX.

IX. *Why dost thou allow a Division among them, which are every where else put together; but in thy own little, narrow, and contracted Heart? All Persons agreeing in the main Design of Religion do meet, and dwell together, and are comprehended in God. They are all put together by this World. They are all the Objects of God's Love; and the World's Hatred.*

I. They all meet in the *Father's* Love. The Lord knows who are his, under all their several Opinions, particular Weaknesses and Disguises. They all meet in the *Son's* Undertaking. When he came  
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the first time into the World, he came as a common Person, that took not the Person, but the Nature of Man upon him: And when he comes the last time, all his Saints shall be gathered to him.

They all again meet in the Unity of the Divine *Spirit*; which is the Band of all beautiful and Blessed Spirits in Heaven and in Earth. The Scripture knows no other Distinction but this, *We are of God, and the whole World lies in Wickedness or in the Evil one.* Why shouldst thou make any Subdivisions?

II. They are all put together by this unkind and angry *World*; whose Rage doth not terminate in the Extirpation of any one particular Sect or Party of good Men; but would by degrees, and as fast as it can, destroy all good Men, and blot out Goodness it self.

### Quest. X.

X. *Hast thou nothing else to do with thy Anger, Wrath and Indignation, than to fall upon thy Brother?*

Surely thou mayst find out other Enemies, if thou lookest *within* or *without*, who do all get an Advantage upon thee, whilst thou art quarrelling with thy Friends. Why should not the Common

Ene-

Enemies of all good Men make them put an end to *plus quam Civilia Bella*, the more than Civil Wars among themselves.

Quest. XI.

XI. *Why where there is any ground of Hopes of our Meeting in Heaven; upon this ground of Hopes is there not a double Diligence required, to agree here on Earth?*

Will it please us in Heaven, to remember we quarrelled in the way thither, and about Trifles? Let it not be thought our Interest to contradict one another here; to dispute one another into Distances, and to fall foul upon one another, seeing it will be our Happiness to agree hereafter; but rather let us strive to be like what we shall, and must be then. We shall be all Love to one another in Heaven: And Love to one another here, would make *another Heaven* upon Earth, throughout our whole way to our *future Heaven*. We are all Fellow-Travel-  
 vellers, we are all going to a State of Love, and we cannot be at our Journey's end too soon.



## Quest. XII.

**XII.** Tell me, *How canst thou live in the Expectation of any thing from God, and in the comfortable Perswasion of his Love, when thou art so unlike to him, and so unsuitable to him; and yet canst not love thy Brother, because he is no more like thee?*

Thy Brother cannot differ from thee as thou dost from God; nor be so short of thee as thou art of God.

## Quest. XIII.

**XIII.** *Why do I think my Brother is out of God's Favour, for the not having of that, upon my having of which, I lay no Argument, no Stress, that I am in the favour of God?*

Is the *Privative* more available to Mischief, than the *Positive* to Good? I do not ground my Acceptation with God, upon the Difference between my Brother and me. Why then do we not give each other the same Measure and Allowance God affords us? And as the Apostle speaks *Rom 15. 7. Receive one another as Christ hath received us to the Glory of God.*

Quest.

## Quest. XIV.

XIV. *Why do I think my Brother is always to know that which I knew but lately; and yet I think I was in Christ before I knew it?*

And why do I not think my Brother may not think the same to morrow, which he does to day? Who knows what a Day may bring forth. There are several Hours of coming into the Vineyard, and several Seasons for the further Discovery of things. *And if any one, saith the Apostle, be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto him.* I am to wait God's Time for this, and not to quarrel with my Brother, for that God hath not yet reveal'd to him.

## Quest. XV.

XV. *Why do I despise my Brother for being short of me, when I do not know but his Place may be to be below me?*

This is the Apostle's Argument, 1 Cor. 12. 14, 15. *For as the Body is one, and hath many Members; and all the Members of that one Body being many, are one Body, so also is Christ, that is, Christ Mystical; and he goes on: The Body is not one Member, but many. If the Foot should say, because I am not the*  
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Hand,

Hand, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body? And if the Ear shall say, because I am not the Eye, I am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body. If the whole Body was an Eye where was the Hearing, if the Whole was Hearing where was the Smelling? But now hath God set the Members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one Member, where was the Body; but now are they many Members, yet but one Body. And the Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those Members of the Body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. And he goes on, and those Members of the Body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant Honour; and our uncomely Parts have more abundant Comeliness. For our Comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant Honour to that part that lacked, that there should be no Schism in the Body; but the Members have the same Care for one another. And whether one Member suffers, all the Members suffer with it; or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it. Now ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particulnr. And God hath set some in the Church; first Apostles, secondly Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then



*then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governours, Diversities of Tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Are all Workers of Miracles? Have all the Gifts of Healing? Do they all speak with Tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best Gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. And that in the following Chapter is LOVE.*

Where is there a Christian among us, that understands and Lives up to this Direction of the Apostles. In the Natural Body, the Head doth not despise the Foot, tho the Head be uppermost. The Head doth not say to the Foot, I have no need of thee. There is nothing like to this in the *Natural* Body: But if any Member suffer, there is a Sympathy through the whole Body; and we suffer more or less in every Member, if we suffer greatly in any. And why should not the same Bowels and Natural Affections hold in the Body *Mystical*? Who can tell me why the Body of Christ should not have all the Capacities, Vertues and Perfections of the Natural Body. No Member here can say to another, I have no need of thee; for every Member supplies its proper place, and is not only an Ornament, but an Instrument for Service and Use in the Body. Let us not then despise any that are *short*

of us, when, it may be, it is *their* Place to be so.

### Quest. XVI.

**XVI.** *Why should I not expect to abate and lessen the Difference between me and my Brother by a fair Debate, and maintaining Christian Love and Converse, where the Lord hath commanded the Blessing: As Psalm 133. 3. why should I not expect there, to lessen the Difference, which will be strengthened by our Distances, and going afunder, and Quarrellings.*

There will be some Misapprehensions when Men discourse and converse together; but when they are afunder, and stand at a distance a thousand times more false Reports. And Men's Persons win, but bare Words do not. And distance gives a Power to Tale-bearers: And actually to take our Leaves of one another, is not the way to close a Wound between one another.

### Quest. XVII.

**XVII.** *Why do I not make the favourable Interpretation for my Brother, which I made, and would have made for my self in the like Case?*

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Not long since I erred, and I do not think I did therein forfeit the Kindness of God to me; at least God did not take the Forfeiture. Why then should I deny my Kindness to my Brother, because he is in an Error? I may be in an Error still, and yet do not think God will impute it to me, because I do *not* know it. And why do not I look upon it as an Infirmary in my Brother, when I did take it to be so in my self? Did this Impartiality prevail, we should have much more Moderation among us, we should be more cloathed with that Modesty and Humility which becomes us. We should be more sensible of our own Shortnesses and Failings, and more patient towards one another. We should give to all that Allowance that we our selves stand in need of, and every honest Soul hath a right to.

*Quest. XVIII.*

*XVIII. Why may not the Powers of this World use an outward Force upon our Estates, Liberties and Bodies, as well as we persecute one anothers Minds and Spirits?*

Soul-Compulsion is certainly the greatest Force and Violence; when *all* must believe and do as we do, or we will give them no Allowance. Never let us com-



plain of any thing done by this World upon our *Outward Man*, while we our selves do thus oppress the *Inward*. We are not, whatever we imagine, in so much danger from the *World*, upon the account of its outward Persecution, as we are from within our selves. Upon this Score, how often hath God punished this angry Spirit in his Children one against another by bringing a common Suffering upon them all. Indeed from hence we may derive all the Evils we have felt, and very much those also which we fear. When the Sheep, as I have elsewhere said, push, and run Head one against another, the Shepherds say we shall have foul Weather. We have already seen the Truth of this Observation; and I am afraid must feel it again. It is easy to presage a *Storm*, when so much ill Weather appears in the Spirits and Actions of Christians. God grant it may prove but a Storm; For from the Animosities that are between good Men, yea between Protestants and Protestants; we have too much cause to fear it will prove a *Deluge*.

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*The Appeal.*

**A**N D now, Gentle Reader, because I would not tire thee or my self, I will gather up the Questions I have mentioned, and many more I might add, in this one Solemn *Appeal* to thee. Tell me sincerely, if after all has been said, thou hast any just defence against the Moderation contended for.

I cannot, for my own part, be so ill-natured, as to imagine how it is possible for thee to find an Excuse from an Universal Love to all, especially to the Saints. Thou art angry with thy Brother because he differs from thee in Opinion and Practice ; what then, he differs no more from thee, than thou dost from him. Why then shouldst thou be more angry with him, than he with thee ? What is it to thee, or to him, what you both think ? You have reason to believe, and practise according to your Belief. He is an honest Man that sincerely *thinks* what he believes and doth. And whatsoever Authority any Secular or Ecclesiastical Power hath Usurped, to impose in this case of Revealed Religion ; we are all here but Fellow-Servants, and upon a Level. So our Saviour hath determined this matter,

ter, *Matth.* 24. 48. where speaking of a Ruler over his Household, he forbids, and threatens him that smites his Fellow-Servant. And if this be not true, we must either, with Mr *Hobs*, resolve all private Judgment, and Conscience into the Prince and Government under which we live; or find out an infallible Judge in Spiritual Matters, that can both determine us here, and Answer for us hereafter; which is a greater piece of *Super-Erogation*, than hath yet had Confidence to appear in the World.

Again thou art angry with thy Brother, because he differs from thee. It may be instead of falling together by the Ears, if you would patiently lay your Ears to one another, and hearken to each other, you would find the Difference lies more in *Words*, as hath been said before, than in *Things*. In *Things Circumstantial* not *Substantial*. Or in the *Explanation* of Substantial Things, more than in the *Things themselves*.

How often have I heard two very different Persons quarrelling themselves into the *same* Sense.

*Object.*



## Object. I.

*But my Brother is in an Error.*

*Ans.* This is still begging the Question; for it signifies no more in this case, than that he differs from thee. And who made thee a Judge of Truth and Falshood for another? I look upon my self in my most sincere Judgment, to be a very Orthodox Person. And so I Charitably think, that every one that differs from me thinks of themselves. My Pretence to Orthodoxy, is an Usurpation beyond measure, when it tends to Anger against those that differ from me. And is a greater Tyranny in the Church, than was ever yet found in the State: For it is a Tyranny over *Minds* and *Souls*, whose Liberties is to be preferr'd before that of *Bodies* and *Estates*. Consider again thy Anger, against thy differing Brother is as foolish a Contradiction to all the Rules of the Gospel, as it is proud and insolent. And this Consideration proves and heigh-tens the Pride of it: For it turns to no account. For *outward* Conformity is no Good, no Advantage to either side, but when it springs from an *inward* Conviction. Thou Proud Angry Man, hast thou Faith? Have it for thy self to God. Thy  
Faith

Faith must not be the Rule of anothers Practice, although voluntarily taken up; much less will it warrant thee to impose upon him. Let every one be fully perswaded in his own Mind, that what he doth pleaseth God, was the Advice of the Primitive Christianity, *Rom. 14. 5.* and in *2 Cor. 5. 10, 11.* *We are, saith the Apostle, made manifest unto you, and we trust also we are made manifest in your Conscience.* The Apostle would have little Joy in them, or Boldness towards them, had it been otherwise, notwithstanding all their outward Conformity to him. Never pretend to have another believe and practice as thou dost; till thou hast convinced him. Conformity in outward Practice, with a Contradicting Principle within, is no Reputation or Advantage on either side. This is as one saith, *In aliorum Sententias Pedibus potius, quam Corde ire*, to run over to other Opinions with our Feet, not our Hearts. Reason either commands Obedience, or punishes the Refusal. For no Man can be at ease that contradicts his own Light. If that be not our *Dux*, our *Guide*, it always proves, as one saith, our *Demon* or Devil; our Tormenter. Truth resisted, is a most unquiet Guest. It follows us into all Jollitry. It troubles all our Feasts. It continually bears Witness against us, and there is no running

ning away from it. Truth imprisoned, is like Light restrained. It turns it self into Fire and consumes us. Speak *Reason*, then if thou expectest Subjection. Not to thee, but to *Reason* and the *Truth*. And if thou hast no *Reason*, be not troublesome to thy Neighbour, with that which I am sure is nothing, if there be no *Reason* for it. It is a vain, proud and foolish Attempt, to think to make others of thy Mind by Force ; and the Foolishness of the Attempt, proves it to be nothing but *Pride*, and a *Self-Interest* to support that *Pride*.

## Object. II.

*But my Brother holds dangerous Opinions to the Publick, as well as to himself and others.*

[*Answ.* So indeed thou sayest, and so, it may be, thou thinkest ; but whether it be really so or not ; and still, whether thou art a proper and Competent Judge, admits of Question. 'Tis well known this has been the Cry in all Ages, where one Religious Party has Opposed or Maligned another, representing them as *dangerous* to the *Publick*, Injurious to the Welfare of the Church ; and Pernicious to the Government and State Politick. And so the way



way to Persecution is readily opened; and all Hands to be engaged against them as a Common Enemy. So in the Case of the First Persecution, or Martyrdom of St Stephen, our Holy Religion, even in its first Unity and Purity, was represented as dangerous to the Law and Customs of the Jewish State, *Acts 6. 13, 14. This Man ceaseth not to speak Blasphemous Words against this Holy Place and the Law. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this Place, and change the Customs which Moses delivered us. So Acts 17. 6, 7. Those that have turn'd the World upside down, [Subverters of Governments, dangerous to the whole World, and so unfit to Live in it] are come hither also. And these do all contrary to the Decrees of Cæsar: Or the Politick Government of the Romans, under which the Land then was.*

In like manner they dealt with our Lord himself, when they led him to Pilate, *Luke 23. 2. And they began to accuse him, saying, we found this Fellow perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to Cæsar, And John 19. 12. we find 'em driving it home upon Pilate; and it prov'd that which Nailed our Saviour to the Cross. And Pilate sought to release him; but the Jews cryed out, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's Friend. This struck him immediately, as it follows in the*

the next Verse, *When therefore Pilate heard that Saying, he brought forth Jesus, and went into the Judgment-Hall.*

Let us observe *this Spirit* contriving and laying the Plot before-hand, even before they had any ground to Accuse him; but seeking to find out, and to have an occasion; as in the Case of Tribute, trying to entangle him in his Talk. *Luke 20. 19. And the Chief Priests and Scribes watch'd him, and sent forth Spies, (i. e. the Cunning Herodians, the Court-Flatterers, or Creatures of the then present Government) which should feign themselves Just Men; that they might take hold of his Words; that so they might deliver him to the Power and Authority of the Governor.* Insomuch, that our Lord perceiving their Craftiness, as it follows, said unto 'em, *Why tempt ye me, shew me a Penny, &c.* Here we see the Nature, and secret Movement of this Spirit. And 'tis needful to touch home the Head of this Serpent, as being that which prevailed for Judgment and Crucifixion of the Son of God; for Execution in the first Martyrdom among his Disciples; and has since Sacrific'd its Millions of the sincere Followers of Christ, and his Disciples in the Bloody Path. Here then, O Querist, examine thy self, and look well, that the Plot

Plot or Principle of *Malecontentment* be not rather in thy own Breast.

Again consider, how art thou Qualified to be a Judge? And dost thou not set up thy self as Judge in thy own Cause against thy Brother, with *Prejudice* on one Hand and *Spleen* on the other, Counsel for the *Plantiff*. But before thou take the Seat, think of two or three things.

I. It may be thou art wholly or very ignorant of thy Brother's Call, Standing or Stature in Religion. Thou Condemnest his Opinion, but it may be, wantest an *Astrolabe*, or the plain *Jacob's Staff*, to take the true Elevation of it. He may be a *Spiritual* Man, and speak of the deep Mystery of God, and thou like a *Nicodemus* take him in the Letter. He may speak of Christ's Kingdom, and thou wrest what is said to make it obnoxious to the Temporal Government. *Jacob* and *Esau* can't agree together, the Heavenly and the Fleishly Wisdom. The Letter kills, says the Apostle; and as the Letter kills, so does the Literal Christian too, *viz.* his Spiritual Brother.

II. Thou settest thy self as a Judge of Party Opinions; but art thou not a *Partisan* thy self? Art thou Universaliz'd in Christian Love, and Love of the Truth

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as such? Dost thou not, with the Generality of Inquirers after it, Squint on this side or on that to a particular Scheme? Art thou free from the Spirit of a Party, the binding Cords of the Authority and Influences thy own Party has over thee? The Spirit of a Party, that moves not by the Genuine Spring, either of Divine or Natural Light; both which, unbyass'd, would tend towards the Fountain of Light: But from the *Heterogeneous* Springs of Education, Custom, Worldly Interest, Worldly Honour, Self-Estimation, and Maintenance of Credit with, and according to the Vogue of the World, with those to whom thou art join'd; from whom to differ would reflect upon thy Judgment, as having been in an Error; and incur the Odium of Friends and Near Relations, and oblige to Recantation for the sake of Truth new found out. No, this Spirit will hold it on, come what will, rather than encounter these *Anakims*; maintain its own Way and Opinions by Hook and by Crook; dispute for them, and keep its hold, tho Baffled and Convinced by demonstration; quarrel for 'em, fight for 'em, persecute for 'em. Always it must be defended; for 'tis theirs now, and their All is bound up in it: And this not so much on Truth's Account (even so far as they may pos-

less it) as their own. And lastly, this Spirit judges its own Way and Opinion to be fittest to have the Preheminence, and squares his Notions and Apprehensions of the Publick Good, according to this *Standard*. And then 'tis but Natural, to conclude those that contradict 'em, to be against *that*, or dangerous to the Publick. And every side, in their turns, if they could get uppermost, would thus *vary* the Notion of Publick Good; and on this Principle proceed to the Suppression of Liberty, and Persecution; excepting where the Principle of *Moderation* and Charity, or the Spirit of true Religion gets Predominant, and stifles or restrains this other Spirit.

Or art thou not *Angry* with thy Brother whom thou here objectest against? Hast thou no private Resentment against him? Is there not some Enmity at Bottom for his opposing thy Sentiment, or declaring against thy Party? This alone will unqualify thee to pass a Right Sentence. Another's Judge must not be prejudic'd against him: But hold the Balance *even*, till Truth appear and Preponderate. Anger and Enmity is not only a false, but a *dead* Weight in the Scale. The Furious Zealot is the worst in the World to discern the Mote in his Brother's Eye, while he has got a *Prickle* in his  
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his own. A Beam may intercept the full Sight, but this wounds the Organ, and strikes the Person with Blindness and Rage. Such a Person is fitter for an *Executioner* than a Judge.

Try thy self then, and it may be thou shalt find the Spring of this Movement, to be not so much Religion in Truth and Reality, as in Notion; not so much the Religion instituted by Christ, as *thy* Religion. Or more precisely not so much Desire of God and Heaven, as Love of thy self and of this World. Or deeper, yet not so much Religion in Notion, or thy Religion in particular, thy Will, thy Zeal, or even thy Ill Nature and Violence against thy Brother, as the Rage of *Antichrist* against *Jesus Christ*, which is at the Bottom of all; or of the *Dragon* against the *Woman*, Rev. 12. 3. the true Church of the *Living* Members of Christ where-ever dispers'd.

But thou thinkest thy self obliged in Conscience, and believest it thy Duty to Detect and Oppose such Errors and Evils, as Service to thy Country, and the Government.

But its first and chiefly thy Duty, to get thy Conscience rightly informed, and acting from a true Ground, the Ground of all Religion, *viz.* Charity and Love. The want of which has had such pernicious



cious and fatal Effects, that now the Wisdom of the Nation, the *Government* it self has made particular Provision against it ; as being it *self* the most *dangerous* to the Publick Weal. And therefore for thy Direction, has Enacted and set up by Law, the true *Standard* and Regulation of Conscience in such Cases, *viz.* *Toleration of Opinion*, and *Liberty of Conscience* in General, as the best Provision for the *Common Safety*. And which thou in point of *Conscience* mayst *Safely* steer by. The Design of which, as also of this Discourse, is not to debar any from a just and Consciencious Discharge of their Duty, in Detecting and Opposing Errors and Evils; but to restrain the Errors, regulate the Abuses, and put out the Wild-Fires that Pretend to, and are disguised under that Sacred Name. Now for better discerning whether thine be such, put the Case of Deism, of Atheism, and of the greatest Profligates thou hearest of, or knowest ; or the worst Liver thou knowest of thy own Party, yet crying out, Our Church, Our Side, Our Friends ; how standest thou here, Hot or Cold, or Luke-warm ? Dost thou take in a Concern and real Grief for 'em ? Dost thou admonish them coming in thy way ? Darest thou reprove them, tho they are Rich and Great ? Or art thou even Angry with them

them for their Wickedness? This thou mayst believe to be *Conscience* indeed: And thou mayst be called for it a Gospel *Phineas*. But if thou art Cold and Indifferent here, and yet burning against thy differing Brother, whose Life and Practice of the Essentials of Religion is unblameable; and wouldst be glad in thy Heart to have him deliver'd up to Justice and to the Government, to be punish'd for his different Sentiment; 'tis a plain Sign thy Zeal is more for thy own *supposed*, than thy Brother's *real* Good; thy Party's, than the Publick Benefit; thy *Diana* than thy *God*.

But supposing Conscience sincere, according to its Light. Since there are Learned Men on all sides, and Pious Christians on all sides, with different Apprehensions of Religion, and Notions of Government; and since the Contentions of Religion, and Erroneous or Pretended Conscience, have so far, and do so generally eat out the Substance of it; and have brought by far the greatest Evils both upon Church and State: And that notwithstanding all their mutual Oppositions and Violences, each Party still stands stiff, and holds up their own Opinion and Way, in the Confidence of their own Reason, and a mutual Presumption that they are in the Right, and all others

in the Wrong; and where there is against each, a Ballance of Seven or Ten to one otherwise as well qualified to judge as they. I say since the Case is thus between the Divided Parties, they might upon the Account alone of Christian Modesty, and so much more of Christian Prudence be brought thus far, at least, to stand still and acquiesce in the mutual Exercise of Charity, and Enjoyment of Liberty in Matters of particular Sentiments and Modes of Religious Worship. And for Private Persons, if they will be *Conscientious* indeed, as to State Affairs, let them imitate the *Primitive* Christians; and let the Government and its Concerns alone in the Hands of those intrusted with it, and Commissioned under it; and keep themselves in the real Practice of Solid Christianity; and, trust that God, who has an *Angel* at the *Helm* of every Government, will still super-intend, appoint, order or alter, whether for Judgment or for Mercy, as he sees fit, and most suitable to the State of his People. And then they will not quarrel with their Brethren about Opinions or Principles without *Ouvert Acts*.

But further, there is a time when we are to let our Brethren alone, and forbear judging them, as to their Mistakes and Evils; when we are not to meddle with  
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the Tares, but let them and the good Wheat grow together, as *Mat. 13. 29, 30.* that is, after they are *grown up* together, and the *Harvest* is near. And this appears to be the Case at this Day. *Jerusalem* and *Babylon* are springing up together, and the Enemy has sown his Tares every where. We are in the latter Ages of the World; the *Signs* of the Times appear; the Fields are white unto the Harvest; the Graces of God rising high in his Chosen; and the Errors and Evils in his Field, the Church, appearing Bare-faced, Rooted and Habituated. The Kingdom coming; the Lord at *Hand*; and the Great Judge himself sitting down in his *Tribunal*. Here then, O Christian, if ever thou must forbear Censuring, Judging and Casting the Stone at others, tho Guilty; as thou hopest for a more Favourable Inquisition upon thy own Errors and Defects. If ever, this is the Season for Moderation to become *Signal* and manifest to all. To drop Matters of Contest Publick or Private, in Church or State. To live Peaceably and Charitably. And to endeavour after that Frame of Spirit, which once invited the *Holy Ghost* to descend and abide as the Constant *Oracle* of Truth in his Church; giving forth the Decision of all Matters immediately himself: *viz.* to wait together at

*Jerusalem*, or the *City of Peace*, in *Unity of Accord*, till it shall please the Great Judge to come, and by the Breath of his Power, or Holy Spirit, to destroy *Anti-christ*, and make the Grand Separation of the Tares and the Wheat, by his own Angel-Reapers; to determine their Controversies, to reduce their Errors; and to take the *Government* upon Himself.

### Object. III.

Well, *but my Brother holds*, you will say, *not only Opinions that are in themselves erroneous and unreasonable; but which are also attended with Consequences that are of a very dangerous Nature and fatal Tendency.*

*Answ.* But we must take heed how we draw out the *Consequences* of any Man's Opinion for him: However, we may do it for our own *Service*, yet we may not do it for our Brother's *Dis-service*. For there are such *Difference of Apprehensions*, and such *Variety of Reasonings*, that no Man is strictly to be charged with the *Odious Consequences* of his own Opinions. Indeed his Opinion may, if we proceed fairly to do it, but the Person cannot. For it may be, he understood not such things to be the *Consequences* of  
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of his Opinion; but honestly infers quite contrary things from it; and believes it to be innocent of such Mischiefs as are charg'd upon it directly and consequentially. For if any such thing could be proved to a good Man, he would immediately renounce his Opinion; and it is plain he thinks no such thing can be inferr'd from it: Because his own Life contradicts all such things.

So that now we are to be very modest and careful in this, and not to prosecute any Man's Opinion to the utmost Extremity in this respect. And however, for our own and the World's Safety, it may be necessary to lay open some Notions, yet we are not to fasten *Consequences* upon the *Authors* of them. A good Man may be engaged and entangled in an Evil Matter, which when he sees it, the Snare is broken.

I think we may, without a Scruple, as one observes, conclude, that *many of the Doctrines of the Church of Rome infer an ill Life*: As the Doctrine of *Indulgences*; the Doctrine of Distinction between *Venial* and *Mortal* Sins; making the greatest part of our Miscarriages only *Venial*; the making of Religion to consist too much in *Externals* and *Ceremonials*; the putting of more Force upon the Commands of *Men*, than the Precepts of God, and the In-



Internals of Religion; the promising of Heaven after a wicked Life, upon a little *Ceremonial* Transaction between the *Priest* and the *dying* Person: But however this Consideration gives me just Zeal against these *Doctrines*, it doth not influence against the *Persons*. That falls under another Consideration. For I have not only so much Charity, but *Justice*, as to think many of that Communion do live well, and love to do so, and by doing so, do confute their own *Doctrines*.

I could give you many other instances nearer home; but I forbear: So that we are not to fall severely upon the Person because of the Consequences of his Opinions. For the Connexion is not always perceived and acknowledged. And the Person doth not with greater Confidence believe the Opinion, than he renounces the Effects and Issues of it, which we put upon his Opinion. Either it is not the immediate or direct Consequence of the Opinion; or however it is not perceived by him.

II. We must also take heed how we fasten Consequences upon *Opinions* and *Doctrines* themselves, as well as the *Persons* that hold them; especially in the most Spiritual Matters. For the World hath

hath all along been horribly mistaken, and clouded in these Respects. Remember, O Lord, saith the Psalmist, *Psa. 89. 50, 51. the Reproach of thy Servant, how I do bear in my Bosom the Reproach of all the mighty People, wherewith thine Enemies have reproached me, wherewith they have reproached the Footsteps of thy Anointed; or of thy Messiah.*

How have the Footsteps of *Jesus Christ* in himself, and in all his Saints, been all along reproached by the Mighty ones of this World, and by the Mighty ones in the Letter, and outward Forms of Religion? What eminent Truth of God hath not an ill Consequence fastened upon it? How hath the whole World and the outward Church too, been alarmed upon the breaking forth of any considerable degree of Spiritual Light? What remarkable Footsteps of Christ have not been reproached by the Mighty ones of the World, and in the Literal and outward Church?

In the days of his Flesh, if he asserted his *Union with God*, he Blasphemed. If he taught and practised the true *Liberty*, they called him a *Wine-bibber* and a *Glutton*. If he shewed his *Love to Sinners*, by conversing with them as a Physician with his Sick, and as a Friend with Sinners,

ners, they feign in a scandalous Sense, he was a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*. If he came in a more strict and *severe* manner in *John Baptist*, then they said *behold he hath a Devil*. If he spake of the *true Living Temple*, which is his own *Spiritual and Heavenly Person*, and the *Person of each Saint in him*; which *Solomon's Temple*, with all its *Beauties and Riches*, did only *Typify*; if he spake of this *Temple*, and said any thing as they thought reflected upon their *Material one*, they said he was *God's Enemy*, *away with him*, *he was not fit to live*. And how in all *Ages* have *Men* cast the *Imputation of the most horrid Prophaneness*, and the *most odious Licentiousness*, upon the *Truths of the Gospel*, as they have shin'd out in their *sweetest and freest Glories*.

*Christ in the Flesh* suffered as an *Enemy to the Established Religion* by the *Law of God*, as an *Enemy to Church and State*, and all his *Followers* have ever since been look'd upon as *dangerous Persons*, and *Men that turn the World upside down*. The *Apostles themselves*, when they first appeared in the *Liberty, Vigour and Glory of the Gospel*, were charged with *Drunkenness*, and afterwards as *Men quite out of their Wits and Mad*. When *St Paul* preached the *Free Grace of the Gospel*, they said he taught *that we might*



*continue in Sin, that Grace might abound.*  
 In the Primitive Times it was charged upon the Saints, because they refused to conform to the Religion of the Nations in which they were conversant, that they resisted the Gods, and were the Enemies of Religion, and that by this means they fell into such Unnatural and Monstrous Uncleanesses, and Barbarous Cruelties, that they fed upon their own Children. Through the whole Course of Popery, the continual Accusations of Protestants have been this, that they were Enemies to Good Works; and under pretence of magnifying Faith and Justification by Christ alone, opened a Flood-Gate to all manner of Wickedness. And how have Protestants themselves gone on as weakly, and falsely charging one anothers Persons and Opinions; some on the one Hand, with Disdain, calling others by the Name of *Puritans, Fanaticks, Libertines*, and Seditious Persons, because they profess a great deal of more Strictness and Holiness of Life and Conversation; and have contended earnestly for our Civil and Spiritual Liberties, and more clearly and powerfully preached the Free and Effectual Grace of God: And others on the other Hand, have condemned all as *Carnal, Formal, Legal Christians*, that are not come up to their  
 Light,

Light, and are jealous lest it should be abused. And this hath been all along the way of the Devil, to scandalize the Truth of God: And it is only the Light of an holy anointing, that can guide us here, and keep us from Stumbling. So that we are to take heed how we fasten ill Consequences, either upon the *Persons*, or Opinions of our Brethren, to the prejudice of our Charity or Brotherly Love; for these have been all along the Stratagems of Opposers and Persecutors, &c.

And notwithstanding the particular Mistakes and Miscarriages of our Brethren, we are to continue our Love to them. We are indeed with all Meekness, to convince our Brother of his Mistake, and to reprove him for his *Miscarriages* in Love: But we are not to take off our Brotherly Affections from him; for he is still a Fellow-Member of the same Body with us, and to be used with the same Tenderness, that one Member hath for another, when it suffers by any Distemper. Above all things, let us preserve our selves from that bitter Zeal which St *James* speaks of, and upon which he sets so evil a Mark, that he brands it with the *Fire of Hell*. If there be, saith he, *bitter Envyings*, but in the Original we have it *bitter Zeal*, this Wisdom is not from above; but *Earthly*,

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*Sensual, and Devilish.* Let us take heed of Suffering our *Zeal* against the Errors and Miscarriages of our Brother, to be mingled and tempered with a *Bitterness* against his Person. As Lightning from Heaven melts the Sword, but doth no Harm to the Scabbard; Let us in all our Reproofs discover an equal *Love* to the Person, and *Hatred* to the Evil; an equal Desire to *destroy* the Evil, and *save* the Person. Or let our Zeal against the Evil, be nothing but *Love* to the Person, flaming forth and burning with a great, but with a Sweet and Divine Force, that it may consume the Dross, for the Gold's sake to which the Dross cleaves. That only is a true Zeal, which, like the *Fire* from the Golden Altar mingled with Incense, fills all round about, and carries up that on which it feeds as a Sacrifice to Heaven, with the richest Odours and Perfumes of a Divine Love. Let us suffer nothing to interrupt or stain this Divine Love, whose Reasons being altogether Divine, ought to subject all other Reasons to themselves. And let us always remember, how that the Measure which we Meet to others, shall be Measured to us again.

*Object.*



## Object. IV.

But there is another thing sticks in our Stomachs, which I would also remove, and that is this, *Must I love my Brother tho he be never so unkind to me, and is continually doing me great Wrongs and Injuries?*

*Ans.* I answer, *particular* Unkindnesses and Injuries, must not dissolve Brotherly Love among Christians. Offences will fall out in good Men's Converses with one another: But more happen than are designed; and more are apprehended than are intended, or really are: And we aggravate those that be. There is no good Man so bad to intend me so much Harm as my inordinate Self-Love makes me apt to conceit; but Injuries neither real nor Imaginary, neither small, nor yet great, among good Men, may make 'em to disoblige themselves mutually, or to dispense with their Brotherly Love. If Wickednesses and Neglects, Wrongs and Injuries, could have interrupted the Love of our Saviour, could have prevented his coming into the World, his coming into our Souls; he had then never visited the World, or us; and he had often taken occasion to desist from his Purposes and

and Designs of Grace towards us: He had long since taken his Leave of us, never to have seen us more. Let us then learn from hence to pursue Brotherly Love through all Discouragements. Thy Brother never wounded *thee*, as thou hast wounded thy *Saviour*: Nor canst thou bear so much from him, as *He* hath born *for* thee, and *from* thee; and that too since he united himself *to thee*, as thy Life and thy Bridegroom; and since he took thee out of the Arms and Embraces of the Devil, into his own Bosom, Bed and Throne. Let us then only be angry with one another for *God's* sake: But let us overlook conceived Injuries against *our selves*. And let us take heed we do not pretend God, when *Self* only is intended and concerned. And let us in all our Actions, leave room for a *better* Understanding. Remember that Answer of our Saviour to *Peter*. *How often must my Brother offend me and I forgive him, must it be Seven Times?* As if that was a great Tryal upon the Patience, Benignity and Good Nature of a Man to forgive *Seven Times*; and more could not be expected from the Best Natured Man in the World. Our Saviour answers, *I say unto thee, not until Seven Times only, but until Seventy Times Seven.* So much larger is the Heart

of Christ than the Heart of Man. And it immediately follows, *Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened*, &c. as if there could be no mention made of Kindness and Good Nature, but he must take occasion to speak of the Gospel, *Mat. 18. 21, &c.* Let us, I say, in all our Anger, leave room for a Pacification. How often have we had this Experience, that two Parties misconceived, having Occasion and Opportunity given, oftentimes have given Satisfaction to the full to each other. It is never good to be *quick* to apprehend Unkindnesses; nor *in hast* to pursue them. There is no Harm in our greatest Stay, Leisure, and Deliberation here; but great danger in being too rash, and in doing too much, and indeed doing *any* thing upon an Exasperation: And take it for a sure Rule whenever we are transported, The slower our Anger is, it is so much the better for us. The Rule is to *be slow to Anger, and not let the Sun go down upon our Wrath.* He doth not certainly mean by that Expression, that it is more lawful for us to be angry by Day than by Night. But the Spiritual Sense is, never let that Sun of Righteousness, if we would have him always shine upon us, go down by our Anger upon our Brother. Thus you see how well Brotherly Love is founded. No Case can happen wherein  
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one good Man ought to withdraw Brotherly Love from another. This is a Duty without Limitation or Exception. I speak now of Men that are agreed in the *main Design* of Religion, that these Men love one another; and so far as they *are agreed*, converse together as Brethren: And wherein they differ, let them forbear one another, and leave it to God to reveal it.

*Quest.* But you will again ask me, *must we take every one for a Christian upon his own Word.*

*Ans.* I answer, yes; we must deal with him as a Christian upon any true Expression of his Hearts being with God. Refuse no Tendency or Inclination towards God; but help it forward, and see what God will bring it to.

I answer again: Determine of a Christian by the *Main*, not by the *Accessories*; not by an Opinion, but by the Faith in Christ, and an Heavenly Life and Conversation; not by the Garment, but the Soul of Religion; not by thy *own Likeness*, but by *God's Image*. Unchristian no Man for not being of thy Party. Do not make those things Matters of Religion, which God hath left Matters of Liberty. Again, remember that Love to all the People of God, is a special Character of God in Men; is a powerful Expression of God in them, and Impression of God upon them. No

Christian may upon any Terms dispense with himself, for afflicting and grieving any one of God's Children. He that leaves out one, hath Cause to fear, that he loves none upon a *right* Ground. He that hath not a secret Sense of his Heart, going after, and closing with all God's People, wants an evident Token of God's Love to himself; and of his own Nature being Rectified and made like to God. It is certain we cannot leave out of our Affections any one who declares himself to be our Brother in Christ, until our Judgments do refuse him from being a Christian. And we must be able to do many things which are not yet done in this Case, before we can take upon us thus to Condemn. Sure I am, it is a dangerous point, upon any grounds, to refuse as a *Christian*, any one in whose Heart *Christ* is Formed. In this Case the true Love *believeth all things*, all the Good that every Subject, either Person or Thing, is capable of. And it is better to be many times *Deceived* here, than to be once *Uncharitable*. It is a sad Miscarriage in us to discountenance and discourage a Comer on. If a Man's Face be towards *Sion* guide him in the way: And if we will be like Christ, take heed not to break the Bruised Reed, nor quench the Smoaking Flax.

To conclude, it is not necessary or possible, that all good Men should be of one Mind :

Mind : But it is necessary that they Love one another. This is a Matter of great Importance, and not to be dispenced with upon any Pretence soever : And how much soever other things may deserve our Zeal, yet Brotherly Love and Charity, mutual Forgiveness, and the Gentleness of Christian Conversation, are the greatest things respecting one another, and such as all other things are to give place to. We are bid indeed to contend earnestly for the Faith ; but above all things we are also said to put on Charity, which is the Band of Perfection, and which never faileth and passeth away.

To prevent all Mistakes give me leave to close what I have said upon this Argument with a few *Cautions*.

In the *first* place : Let no Man take occasion from what hath been asserted, to think it is a light Matter what Opinion we hold, whether true or false : For there is great Danger in Erroneous Opinions, and it is fit Men should be very Chary about Truth. For Truth is the *Food* of Souls, and Error their *Poison*. And every Man looks well to what he Eats. Truth or Falseness are things immediate to the Health or Sickness of our Souls : And therefore we must see with our own Eyes, understand for our selves, and take nothing carelessly and upon Trust. Why should not there be an equal Care to preserve the Mind



from Falshood, as well as the Conversation from Miscarriages? For a Lie in the Understanding, is no less a Blot, than a Spot in the Conversation. Doth that which darkens the Mind do us less prejudice, than that which disgraces the Person, and deforms an Act? Doth not Error in Judgment so deform the Top of the Soul? Is not the Understanding the leading part of it? He that entertains Error defiles the purest part of his Mind, and *blinds* his own Guide. Nothing can be right, when the Understanding is false. It is better the Understanding should continue a *Rasa Tabula*, a blank, a fair Sheet of Paper, than be scribbled upon, blotted or blurr'd with Lies. For *Intus existens prohibet alienum*, what is within already, forbids what would enter. You may sooner *inform* and *teach* Ignorance, than *reform* and *unteach* Error. It is easier to Fill than to Empty. It is hard to dislodge Possession. *Air* void of Light, partakes of it in a moment: But the *Earth* must first be rid of its Grossness. Error bewitches, and procures fond and Bastardly Affections. We read in Scripture of the Leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Doctrine of the *Nicholaitans*, which God hates. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. We are to take notice of those that consent not to *wholesom Doctrine*, and who hold not the *Form of sound Words*, and to beware of those that creep in-

into Houses to *beguile* unstable Souls. And in *Gal. 5. 20.* *Heresies* are reckoned among the *Works of the Flesh*. Error is a very *infecting* thing, and passeth like Lightning from one to another. Men are *easily* caught here; but *hardly* restored. *2 Tim. 1. 7.* The Spirit of the Gospel is called the *Spirit of a Sound Mind*. After all this, let no Man think that Error in Judgment is a slight thing. Falshood and Lies are Meat the Soul will never be able to digest. Truth is its Food. All Error is *in prejudicium Animæ*, to the Wrong of the Soul, and some are *in perniciem*, to the Ruin of it. That only can be said of Error, which is of Sin in Life, *1 John 2. 1.* *If any Man Sin, we have an Advocate, viz, not that we may Sin.* No Man takes Poison because he hath an *Antidote*; but that we may be delivered from Sin, and all the ill Consequences of it.

Again, I have not in my arguing for a Mutual Forbearance, &c. been pleading for *Scepticism*, nor an Indifferency of Opinion and Practice in Religion: As if it were no matter what we believe, or what we profess; how we conform to any Party or Sect, or how we differ from them. I intend in nothing I have said, to countenance a *Wantonness of Opinions* in things of Religion, any more than a *Bitterness of Spirit*. Nor do I design in what I have discoursed to perplex your Minds, and

make them Irresolute, Remiss, and Negligent in Matters of Religion. No, I have not been pleading for Scepticism, but against *Dogmatical* Resoluteness and Impatience towards others that disagree. Be as positive as thou wilt in thy *own* Notions, provided thou dost not *impose* them upon thy Brethren. I do not understand *Solon's* Law, which in Factions compell'd every particular Person to be of one side or other: For as there are some Causes in which I would be ashamed of the Calumny of *Neutrality*; so there are others in which I think it is better to have Knowledge than Opinion, and Indifferency than bitter Zeal. Nor am I pleading for an Opinion and Practice in Matters of Religion, but quite the contrary. I would not have great Vital and Fundamental Truths, justled out by Lesser. I would have *mutual* Permission in things Undetermined and Unnecessary. And I would not have Men make more Necessaries than God hath made. It is true, as he said, *nihil minimum in Religione*, there is nothing little in Religion. Yet our Saviour distinguishes between *Tith of Mint, Annis and Cummin*, and the *Great things of the Law*. And the Apostolical Council between *Necessary and Unnecessary*, *Acts 15. 28*. And St Paul between *Meats, and Drinks*, and the *Kingdom of God, which consists in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*.



I would not have the *Great and Eternal* Truths and Duties of the Gospel subjected to things Indifferent; or that concern only External Polity and Government of the Church; forgetting the antient and true Bounds of *Unity*, viz. *One God, one Lord, one Spirit, one Faith, &c. not one Opinion, not one Ceremony, not one Form.* I would not have Men call all Opinion by the Name of Religion, nor give to all their own Fancies the Title of Faith; nor would I have a Man's Head cut off (as one speaks) because he hath a Wart upon his Cheek, or some Lines in his Face to distinguish him from me. I would not have conceit in Religion more eagerly pursued than known undoubted Truths. Had we fewer Fancies of our own Religion, and fewer false Glasses, we should be much better Natured one to another. For it is true, that Mens Opinions are too generally their own *Creatures*; and this makes them so fond of them, and so angry with them that oppose them.

Again, I do not think it is all one what a Man thinks or believes. They are two old Mistakes, and they mutually beget one another: One faith, it is no Matter how Men *Live*, so they do but *Believe* aright, and are sound and *Orthodox* in the Faith: The other, it is no matter how a Man *Believes*, so he *Lives* well. Tho I think the *First* the most dangerous, yet I like  
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neither of them. It is the double Policy of the Spiritual Enemy. Either to counterfeit Holiness of Life, to establish and authorize Error: Or by Corruption of Manners to discredit Truth, and to draw into question things Lawful. When the Devil hath fitted himself with an Instrument to go abroad to seduce others by false Doctrine, he will help forward to be outwardly refined; that there may be the greater *Energy of Deceit*. And on the other hand he brings all the Reproach he can on the Miscarriages of them that profess it. For my own part, I am of that great Man's Opinion here, that tells us, Faith and Piety are but one thing, and that they distinguish too nicely, that would separate True Faith and an Holy Life.

Nor am I against your Contending for the Truth. But above all things, I would have a Friendship, a Charity as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 14. 1. And as St Peter again exhorts us, 1 Pet. 4. 8. *Among all things to have fervent Charity among your selves.* Contend as much as thou wilt for what thou likest and believest to be the Truth of God, and endeavour all thou canst to suppress Error: But let it be by such Weapons as the Gospel allows. Thy Brother is ready to receive thy *Arguments*: but he doth not like thy *Blows*. And it is indeed to be suspected thou wantest *Reason* when thou makest use of *Force*.  
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Overcome thy Differing Brother by the Strength of thy Argument, by the Holiness and Sweetness of thy Life, by the Word of God and Prayer: But never expect to bring him to understand thy Mind by knocking out his Brains. Be as Zealous as thou wilt for what thou callest Truth: But take heed how thou puttest the Authority and Stamp of God upon thy own Opinions, and how in contending for them, thou lettest go Brotherly Love.

Nor am I again in this Discourse pleading for an Indifference of *Form*, and making all alike. I grant some to be *purser* than others: and I believe it the Duty of every Christian to follow after the best. But I shew, as the Apostle speaks, a more excellent Way, than that of any Form; and that is Love. I am not pouring out any Contempt upon the outward Forms of Religion, provided we are in a right manner subject to them. I am not against Christians Gathering and Imbodying. I think it is their Duty so to do; but provided still it is not to this Opinion, or Form, but to *Christ*: As good old Jacob, Gen. 49. 10. *unto him shall the Gathering of the People be.* All gathering together, and not to *him*, will, instead of Unity and Beauty, bring forth Division, Breaches and Deformity. I am not against good Men's *particular* uniting in  
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their several Forms and Ways of Worship; so they be not to the Prejudice of an *Universal* Charity, and exclusive of any truly sincerely good Christian, so far as we are agreed one with another. It is not necessary that all good Men should be of a particular Church; nor is it possible: But I would have no Measure of Union and Communion among Good Men fixed, that shall exclude any Good Man. And give me leave to say it, this is a Principle will walk throughout the World, and be Victorious when all our Names and Distinctions are vanished and gone.

I am not against these things, provided the Way of Christ's Future Coming be kept open: Provided we do not hinder Growth, and make our Forms and Administrations, an Universal Rule to all Measures, and Statutes. Forms of Religion are to be as Midwives to the Spiritual Births; but when they Strangle the Male-Children, they become *Egyptians*. Provided again we are in the *Power*. For there is nothing more dangerous than an *Imitation* of the best things. Provided again, we do not think our selves Full and Rich, and wanting nothing in these things, without Christ.

Again, I design not by any thing I have said upon this Argument, to give Christians leave to Profess and Practise any thing

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outwardly in Religion, though it be contrary to their own Inward Sense. This is a Compliance beyond all the Kindness I have been contending for among Brethren, how large so ever my Charity is to all that differ from me. God hath not allowed me to touch, or taste, or handle, where I have not been fully satisfied in my own Conscience; I do not think they deserve the Name of *Latitudinarians* that can comply with every thing that is uppermost in Religion: But they who strictly walk with God, and serve him according to their own Faith and Conscience; and give the same Liberty to all that differ from them. I would have Men do nothing in Religion upon Compliment, or Force. I would have *no Man's Opinion*, as one faith, *another Man's Rule, or his own Snare*: But that we should all use one another so Charitably, that no Man be tempted to Hypocrisy; nor his Sincerity rendered troublesome or unsafe to himself.

Nothing that I have said, must be extended to countenance any of these things. We have betrayed the World to a foolish Charity, in counting all Christians that live within *Christendom*, as we call it; and we must not sooth Men up in their fond Conceit they have gotten; for *Antichrist* under a Pretence of Christ is spread over the Christian World, and every Reformation hitherto hath left something of  
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Him behind. We are to be faithful in this Case, and to keep our selves unspotted from the World. And if we find no Stirring, no Breathing of the Life of Christ in our Neighbour, we are to witness against such a State, and not to let him lie dying by us, whilst he lives only in a Imaginary Paradise, and *Dreams* of Heaven. If you saw one walking in his Sleep to a dangerous Place, a Precipice, would you suffer him to go on and break his Neck, and not preserve him? The best Service we can do to Natural Men is to *awaken* them, and this we are to endeavour, or we have no Charity in us.

It is not Agreement in a Form I have been pleading for; but an Unity of Spirit, Life and Power: And we are with all Love and Tenderneſs to bear Witness against the *Religion* of this World, as well as the *Profaneneſs* of it. And altho hereby we enrage Carnal and Formal Professors against us; yet it will be well for Religion to do it: For it never thrives well, when the World can bear it; and that is no *Reformation* in which the World and Saints can close. But that which my Discourse hath tended to, is this: That where the Case is laid between Good Men, agreed in the *main Design* of Religion, and differing in *some particulars*, these are to overlook each others Differences, and to Unite as much as can be. But for others who  
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as the Apostle speaks, *Phil. 3. 18, 19. as Enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Blley, and whose Glory is their Shame, and who mind Earthly things. Who have a Form of Godliness but deny the Power, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 3. 5. Who turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, Jude 4. From such turn away, and have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them. For what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness, and what Communion hath Light with Darkness? When Light and Darkness meet, Twilight shakes Hands with them both. But as for all that are agreed in the main Design of Religion, those ought to hold together. And there is nothing extraordinarily said, but what every Good Man, without Pre-sumption, may Demand of all his Fellow-Christians whatsoever. To admit him to all Acts of Christian Communion so far as they are agreed; for one Christian to say give me thy Advice, admit me to a Fellowship in all Matters of Religion, so far as we have attained; pray for me, pray with me, let me see with thy Eyes, let me have thy Hand, thy Strength, thy Experience to help me, lend me thy Counsel and thy Purse too, if there be need on one side, and Capacity on the other. This is no more than for one Christian to say to another pay me my due, be a Christian to me. And I dare boldly say it, a Man,*

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as a Man, hath not more right to the Common Air, than every true Christian hath to demand all this of every other Christian.

These are *Jura Christianorum*, the *Christians Rights*; and wheresoever the Hardness of thy Heart hath shut thy poor Brother out of thy Purse, and thou makest a Shift to find Excuses for that, sure I am thou hast no reason to exclude him out of thy Soul, out of thy Spiritual Life and the Experience of it. I dare boldly say, a Man, as a Man, hath not more Right to breathe in the Common Air, than a Christian hath to require this of any Christian. And it is not in the Power of any Good Man, so to cloister up and Sequester himself; but if any Man come from the East or West, he is to give him all this. By the *Charter* which all good Men hold, he is to have all this. And a Man hath no more Power, Authority and Right to hinder this, than he hath to intercept the Light of the *Sun* from him, and say it shall not shine upon such a Man. And one good Man may as reasonably demand this of any Good Man, as one Man may bid another stand out of his Light



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